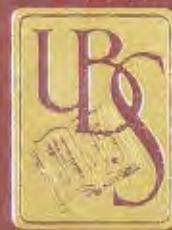


HELPS FOR TRANSLATORS

A TRANSLATORS HANDBOOK
on
THE BOOK OF JONAH

**BRYNMOR F. PRICE
and
EUGENE A. NIDA**



**A TRANSLATORS HANDBOOK
ON THE BOOK OF JONAH**

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PREFACE

This Translators Handbook on the book of Jonah follows in format and emphasis the pattern which has been established in the preparation of a number of recent Handbooks in the UBS series of Helps for Translators. Special attention is paid to the structure of the discourse as a means of revealing as clearly as possible the various related themes.

As in the case of other volumes in this series of Helps, the various languages in which particular renderings are employed are not identified, except for major European languages.

Though the sources of scholarly opinion are cited in particularly important instances, no attempt is made to identify all the possible sources, since this volume is not designed to be an analysis of scholarly opinion, but a guide to translators who are attempting to deal with the many difficulties which they encounter in rendering the Scriptures into a meaningful form of language. A bibliography is of course provided for the benefit of those who are especially interested in the major scholarly sources.

Special thanks must be extended to members of the United Bible Societies Committee on Helps for Translators, who have carefully reviewed the manuscript of this volume, and to Paul C. Clarke and Lorraine Pellon who have assisted so materially in the editorial processes and in the preparation of the text for offset reproduction.

Brynmor F. Price
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September 1977

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS VOLUME

Bible texts and versions cited (for details see Bibliography, page 84):

JB	Jerusalem Bible (English)
KJV	King James Version
LB	Living Bible
NAB	New American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
TEV	Today's English Version

Books of the Bible:

2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Exo	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Hab	Habakkuk
Hos	Hosea
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Matt	Matthew
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Prov	Proverbs
Psa	Psalms
1 Sam	1 Samuel
2 Sam	2 Samuel

The Purpose of the Book of Jonah

The book of Jonah contains one of the best known stories in the Old Testament. Many people know of only one incident in the book--the fish swallowing Jonah, especially since that incident is singled out in the teaching of Jesus and reproduced in traditional Christian art.

But the reference in Matthew to Jonah's three-day stay in the big fish is immediately followed by a reminder that the people of Nineveh repented when they heard Jonah's message (Matt 12.40,41). The message of the book may be summed up as "What is likely to happen when people repent." Two things happen, according to this book. In the first place, God responded to the repentance of the people of Nineveh by changing his mind and sparing them. In the second place, Jonah, who at first had been unwilling to give them an opportunity for repentance and had only preached to them because he was forced to, was highly annoyed.

So here among the "Minor Prophets" is a book about a prophet and his reaction to those who listened to him. It differs from all the other books in this section of the Old Testament, which contain God's word to Israel and the nations through his prophets. Instead, this book contains God's word to a prophet through other people, all of whom are non-Israelites, but who are able to teach him something which he did not fully appreciate before about the God of Israel, who is "a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind," even to those least deserving of his grace and even to a stubborn prophet.

The Structure of the Book of Jonah

The book of Jonah is a carefully designed literary work, in which a pattern can clearly be seen. On the broadest scale, the book can be divided into two halves, the first consisting of chapters 1 and 2, and the second of chapters 3 and 4.

In both halves of the book, Jonah receives a call from God to go to Nineveh. The first time he disobeys, and the second time he obeys. In both cases he encounters a group of non-Israelites who are in danger. In the first chapter, the foreign sailors are terrified because of the storm. They take steps to ensure their safety, and eventually turn to the LORD in worship. In the third chapter, the people of Nineveh are alarmed at Jonah's message of doom, so they take action to avoid God's punishment. The sailors were saved from the storm in the first chapter, and the inhabitants of Nineveh were saved from the destruction of their city when God spared them on account of their penitence.

The first and third chapters balance one another, and so do the second and the fourth. Whereas in chapters 1 and 3

Jonah had been with the sailors and with the people of Nineveh, although his words had been few (1.9,12; 3.4), in chapters 2 and 4 Jonah is alone with God. The second chapter consists almost entirely of Jonah's prayer addressed to God, and in the fourth chapter the action consists to a great extent of a dialogue between Jonah and God. The first prayer uses the language of the book of Psalms, while the prayer at the beginning of chapter 4 reflects the language of the Pentateuch and of Elijah.

There is a structured pattern to the prayer in chapter 2, particularly in those verses which describe specifically the experience of the drowning man. Verses two and seven enclose this section and echo each other with their reference to prayer being heard. The first half of verse 3 corresponds to the last half of verse 6, since in the first the LORD throws the sufferer down to the depths and in the second brings him up again. The second half of verse 3, with its description of the overwhelming depths, finds an echo in verse 5 and the first part of verse 6. The closing words of verse 4 are the same as the closing words of verse 7 in the Hebrew text, while verses 8 and 9 relate the prayer to the closing verses of chapter 1.

In chapter 3, Jonah is in the background, and attention is centered on the people of Nineveh and their nameless king. Jonah's message is purely negative and unconditional, but the response of the king and people of Nineveh is as positive as could possibly be expected, including faith and fasting (verse 5), self-abasement (verse 6), prayer (verse 8) and repentance (verse 10). Their concern with God's will compensates for the lack of any reference to God in Jonah's message.

In chapter 4 Jonah once again occupies the center of the stage. If his prayer in chapter 2 had expressed a desire for life, his prayer in 4.2,3 asks for his life to be brought to an end. Twice he expresses this preference for death rather than life, the first time (verse 3) because the people of Nineveh were allowed to live, and the second time (verse 8) because the plant that sheltered him had died.

The book ends with a question in Hebrew, but the answer is clearly implied.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

The title The Book of Jonah can be misleading, for in a literal translation it might very well suggest that this is a book written by Jonah. As far as the discourse structure would indicate, Jonah is not writing about himself. Therefore, we must assume that this is "The Book about Jonah." In many cases the appropriate expression would simply be "The Writings about Jonah."

In some languages it may be important to employ a title which involves more than the name of a person (as is typical in the case of many of the prophetic books, for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.) since the identification of a person simply by a personal name without some title may appear insulting. Therefore, one may wish to use some such title as "The Book about the Prophet Jonah." An expression for "prophet" may be rendered, as in many instances, by a phrase "one who speaks for God." It is inappropriate to use a term which simply means "diviner" or "fortune teller."

C H A P T E R 1

Today's English Version

Revised Standard Version

Jonah Disobeys the LORD

1 One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amitai. 2 He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware of how wicked its people are." 3 Jonah, however, set out in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD. He went to Joppa, where he found a ship about to go to Spain. He paid the fare and went aboard with the crew to sail to Spain, where he would be away from the LORD.

The form of the section heading Jonah Disobeys the LORD must be changed in some languages from present to past tense, namely, "Jonah disobeyed the Lord." Since this is a narrative dealing with past events, only a past tense may be appropriate in some languages. In English the present tense is used to identify the nature of the immediately following story, even though the narrative itself occurs in past tense forms.

The initial paragraph serves as an excellent setting for the story as a whole: the prophet is identified, the commission from the Lord is made specific, Jonah's reaction is clearly indicated, and what he does in order to try to escape from the Lord is briefly described. Since the order of

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amitai, saying,
2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me."
3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

1.1

sentences follows the historical development of the narrative, there are relatively few problems in making clear the sequence of events and the relationship between the events.

1.1 One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai.

The book of Jonah, like the other prophetical books of the Old Testament, begins with an introduction or sub-title indicating the circumstances in which God's message came to the prophet: One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai.

The title "prophet" and the verb "prophesy" do not, however, occur in this verse, nor in the whole of the book. The introductory verse is, in spite of this, intended to indicate that Jonah was a prophet, since it states that the LORD spoke to Jonah, or as in Revised Standard Version (RSV), "the word of the Lord came to Jonah." There is no one standard form to introduce all the fifteen prophetical books, but they all have in common a reference either to the "word of the Lord" (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.) or to "the vision... which he saw" (Isaiah, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk). As a rule, a date is given, which either relates the activity of the prophet to some period in Israel's history (Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah) or states more precisely the exact date at which God's message was entrusted to the prophet (Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah). In Jonah alone does the introduction take the form of a plain statement that at some unspecified time (one day), the word of the Lord was addressed to the prophet. In this way the reader is indirectly informed that this is no ordinary collection of prophecies, such as those of Amos, or Micah, but is a narrative about a prophet.

In some languages, one set expression or another is used to indicate the beginning of a story. "Once upon a time" (Judges 9.8 New English Bible [NEB]) suggests that what follows is a work of fiction. This is, in fact, how Winding Quest (A. T. Dale) introduces Jonah, "Once upon a time God spoke to Jonah," but this is unsuitable in a translation. "Long ago" (Ruth 1.1 NEB) indicates that the story which follows was written down long after the events it describes.

A literal rendering of one day can be misleading because it might suggest a specific day when the Lord spoke. A more typical equivalent may be "on an occasion" or "on some day." In this way the indefiniteness of the time is emphasized.

In a number of languages it is awkward to use a double expression of speaking, for example, "The Lord spoke...he said." A much more natural form of expression may be "One day the Lord said to Jonah son of Amittai, Go to Nineveh..." Other languages, however, may employ a double expression of speaking in the form, "The Lord spoke to Jonah son of Amittai. What he said was, Go to Nineveh..."

The first word of the book in Hebrew, wayyehi, often acts as nothing more than an introductory expression which need not be represented in translation. Several books begin with it, and in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Esther and Ezekiel its omission in translation would make no difference to the meaning. Here, however, it is the main verb in the sentence, as in NEB "The word of the LORD came..." The same verb occurs in a relative clause at the opening of Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Micah and Zephaniah, but in the book of Jonah the prefix to the verb (King James Version [KJV] "Now the word of the LORD...") raises the question whether this is to be taken as a conjunction, and if so, with what it links the opening sentence. There is no force in any argument which would try to link Jonah with Obadiah (compare Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel as a linked succession of narratives).¹

Like the prophetic books mentioned in the preceding paragraph, this one introduces the "word of the Lord" in the very first verse, and tells us that it "came" to Jonah (NEB). The word used for "came" is not the usual verb of motion, but is used many times to describe the action of the word of God, or even of a human message (1 Sam 3.21[TEV]; 4.1[RSV]). The individual messages of the prophets often begin with the formula "The word of the Lord came to..." (nearly 40 times in Jeremiah and over 50 times in Ezekiel). This kind of formula became the standard form of introduction to the prophetic books when the individual messages were collected.

"The word of the LORD came" can be translated as the Lord spoke as in Today's English Version (TEV), or even "Jonah heard the Lord saying to him." Knox renders "The Lord's voice came to Jonah," and Berkeley leads into the next verse by saying "with this message:". In the Hebrew expression used here, God's "word" is described as something with an almost independent existence, in the same way as his spirit "comes upon" Othniel (Judges 3.10), Jephthah (Judges 11.29), Saul (1 Sam 19.23), Azariah (2 Chr 15.1), and Jahaziel (2 Chr 20.14). Similarly, in Ezekiel the hand of the Lord "comes upon" the prophet (1.3, where the word of the Lord is also said to come to him: 3.22, 33.22, 37.1, 40.1).

Some translators have felt that an expression such as "the Lord spoke to Jonah" is not really adequate to render the implications of the expression "the word of the Lord came to Jonah." In order to suggest something of the role of the prophet receiving a special message from the Lord, these translators have preferred an expression such as "the Lord uttered a special message to Jonah" or "the Lord revealed to Jonah what he should do." In this way something of the emphasis of "the word of the Lord coming" can be communicated, thus suggesting the prophetic role which Jonah was to have.

The expression "the word of the Lord came" also occurs in the New Testament in Luke 3.2, where the use of these

words suggests to the reader that John the Baptist is indeed a prophet.

In the TEV text the Hebrew proper name, generally transliterated as Yahweh, but traditionally pronounced as Jehovah, is here indicated by capital letters LORD, following the wide-spread usage in English. By the use of capital letters the Hebrew name may be distinguished orthographically from the Hebrew title adonai, rendered as Lord in TEV. The rendering of Yahweh as LORD goes back to ancient tradition among Jews who regularly marked the four-consonant Hebrew name with the vowels of adonai and in reading substituted adonai for Yahweh. The proper name for God was regarded as so holy that it was only very rarely pronounced. Since an orthographic distinction between the rendering of Yahweh and adonai is not necessarily recommended in other languages, no attempt is made to maintain this distinction in the discussions in this volume.

The only other place in the Old Testament where Jonah is mentioned is in 2 Kings 14.25, where he is described both as a prophet and as the Lord's "servant." Nothing else is known about that prophet, but the author of the book of Jonah wishes his readers to understand that Jonah and the prophet were one and the same person, since the name of his father is identical. The Jonah of 2 Kings lived in the eighth century B.C. so it is implied that that is the period of the events in this book. There is nothing to indicate who wrote the book, and no suggestion that the author was Jonah himself.

1.2

He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware of how wicked its people are."

This verse summarizes God's instructions to Jonah. It begins with a word that is translated in older versions as "arise" (RSV). But the Hebrew verb qum is frequently used with a so-called "inceptive" force to mark the beginning of an enterprise or to indicate that the action required is to take place immediately, for example, Genesis 19.14,15, Judges 4.14, Exodus 32.1, in all of which RSV has "Up!" or "Arise!" In these places the person addressed is not necessarily lying down, but is being urged to act immediately (see Isa 52.2 KJV). So here one could say, "Go at once to the great city called Nineveh"--a conventional formula going back to Genesis 10.12. As suggested in the phrase "to the great city called Nineveh," it may be necessary to reverse the order of the TEV Nineveh, that great city. The more usual order in languages is to have the generic expression that great city occur first, followed by the more specific name Nineveh, for example, "to the great city which is Nineveh" or simply "to that great city,

Nineveh." If the phrase "great city" is placed after the term Nineveh, it may be necessary to employ a relative clause, for example, "to Nineveh, which is a great city."

On reaching Nineveh, Jonah is to "denounce it" (NEB) or speak out against it. That is to say, he is to proclaim God's message of judgment against Nineveh. He is to do so because the evil of the city is staring God in the face (compare NEB). The nature of Nineveh's evil is not disclosed. The language here is similar to that of Genesis 18.20, 21 with regard to Sodom and Gomorrah, which were noted for their wickedness.

Speak out against it may be difficult to render satisfactorily in some languages. It may even be necessary to use a form of direct discourse, for example, "say to them, You are guilty," or "declare, You have sinned very much." In some cases an idiomatic expression may be employed, for example, "hang great blame upon it" or "declare that the people there are covered with guilt."

The word ki in the Hebrew is open to more than one interpretation. It can mean "that," introducing a noun clause, or it can mean "for, because." At first sight it would appear that TEV follows neither of these courses, but the second is in fact implied by the punctuation. Most translators render the Hebrew in the same way as TEV (compare RSV NEB), but Jerusalem Bible (JB) (so also Moffatt) renders the word as "that": "inform them that their wickedness has become known to me," though "inform" weakens the element of proclamation in the original. Living Bible (LB): "It smells to highest heaven" is vivid, but hardly justified as a translation. The Hebrew changes from 3rd singular against it to 3rd plural "their wickedness," as expressed in New American Bible (NAB) and RSV, but this does not need to be brought out in a translation. NEB avoids this by using "its" with reference to Nineveh, and TEV makes explicit the fact that "their" refers to its people. The literal rendering in RSV suggests, as does the Hebrew, that God is watching from up in heaven what takes place down on earth.

I am aware may be rendered merely as "I have seen" or "I know." Somewhat greater force may be expressed in some languages by inverting the subject and object, for example, "the wickedness of its people has struck my eyes."

1.3

Jonah, however, set out in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD. He went to Joppa, where he found a ship about to go to Spain. He paid his fare and went aboard with the crew to sail to Spain, where he would be away from the LORD.

Unlike Moses and Jeremiah, who protest against the mission with which they are entrusted, Jonah simply indicates,

by his actions rather than his words, his refusal to obey. Amos claimed that when the prophets were commissioned with God's message, they could not but proclaim it (3.8), but Jonah attempts to escape, like a deserter.

The conjunction however is particularly important at this point since it marks the contrast between God's command and Jonah's decision to do something quite different. Sometimes this adversative emphasis can be indicated simply by an introductory conjunction such as "but." In other instances it may be necessary to reinforce this contrast by saying "but in contrast with this" or "but on the contrary."

According to the KJV Jonah "rose up to flee," since the verb used here is the same as in verse 2; so here set out (TEV). Three times in the Hebrew text of this verse Tarshish is mentioned, and TEV arrives at the sense by translating the first occurrence as set out in the opposite direction. He had been told to go east, so instead he tries to go as far as possible in a westerly direction, in order to avoid carrying out God's command. Tarshish is rendered as Spain in the other two occurrences in this verse in TEV. The reader is likely to have a clearer idea of where Spain is rather than to be able to identify Tarshish. Just where Tarshish was located is not known, but it is generally identified with a place on the coast of Spain. By introducing the verse with the words "But Jonah was afraid to go," LB misrepresents the thought of the writer. The Hebrew does not indicate this, and it contradicts 4.2.

It may not always be easy to render the expression "the opposite direction," for the term opposite involves rather complex relationships. Therefore, one may need to translate "he did not set out toward Nineveh, but he went in a direction away from Nineveh" or "rather than going toward Nineveh, he went away from Nineveh."

To get away from the Lord may be rendered simply as "to escape from the Lord," but it may also be necessary in certain instances to describe Jonah's intent as "to go to a place where the Lord would not be." Such an expression highlights the futility of what Jonah was attempting to do, since he later declares that the Lord is the God of heaven, who made both the land and the sea. It is this very contradictory situation which the author of the book of Jonah apparently wished to emphasize.

He "went down to Joppa" (NEB) because that town, the modern Jaffa, was a port on the coast of the Mediterranean (see Acts 9.36). If the difference in elevation between central Palestine and the seacoast is not thought to be worth emphasizing, some such rendering as TEV is sufficient. At Joppa he found a ship, but the verb masa here, as often, does not indicate the conclusion of a search for something lost, but simply coming across something by chance--as in Chinese Union Version here (as also in Genesis 4.14, 1 Samuel 9.11).

The ship was about to go, in the sense indicated by the Hebrew participle denoting future action shortly to take place. The verb used here in Hebrew generally indicates motion towards the speaker or writer, but here in a direction away from the writer (compare Isa 47.5). There is no clear indication of the size of the ship in modern terms, but since its destination was Tarshish, it would have been large by the standards of those days. In fact, the expression "ships of Tarshish" was sometimes used to indicate large "ocean-going" vessels (Isa 2.16, 23.1,14, 60.9 etc.). As is clear later in the chapter, the ship was propelled by rowing, though it may well have had sails in addition.

In a number of languages it may be necessary to be specific with verbs of "going," since the means of travel may have obligatory features. Therefore, he went to Joppa may be best rendered as "he walked to Joppa," for this was probably his means of travel. But in speaking about a ship about to go to Spain, it may be necessary to use a term applicable only to ships, for example, "to sail" or "to be rowed."

About to go to Spain must be expressed in some languages as "which the sailors were preparing for sailing to Spain" or "on which people would soon be leaving for Spain." It may be quite wrong to speak simply of "a ship about to go to Spain," since the implication might be that the ship went to Spain on its own rather than under the direction of a helmsman and with the help of a crew.

He paid his fare. This is a more likely meaning than "he paid for the ship," as claimed by some Jewish and a few modern commentators. LB's "he bought a ticket" is unnecessarily anachronistic. The Hebrew word elsewhere always has the meaning of "wages" or "reward."

He paid his fare may be rendered simply as "he paid in order to travel" or "he paid what it cost to go to Spain."

And went aboard conveys the sense rather more naturally than KJV "went down into it," with its literal correspondence with the Hebrew verb "to go down." Here again LB brings additional factors into the translation which are not justified by the Hebrew, "and climbed down into the dark hold of the ship to hide there from the Lord." For, after all, this verse states clearly that Jonah's purpose in fleeing to Tarshish was to avoid the Lord's presence there, and not simply in the ship.

With the crew is required to make clear the meaning of the Hebrew "with them" (so KJV).² NEB leaves this to be understood, and substitutes "to travel by it."

A literal rendering of went aboard with the crew might suggest that he became a part of the crew. It may be necessary, therefore, to change the order somewhat and say "went aboard to sail to Spain with the crew."

The Hebrew repeats "to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord," and TEV achieves this emphasis, but by varying

the wording. At the beginning of the verse the purpose of Jonah's journey to the west is underlined, whereas at the end of the verse the expected consequence of this move is emphasized. So JB: "decided to run away from Yahweh,...to get away from Yahweh." The repetition may be intended by the writer to emphasize the irony of imagining that one could escape from God by any journey, however long. Jewish Publication Society brings out the thought of Jonah's prophetic commission by "from the LORD's service...away from the service of the LORD."

A literal translation of where he would be away from the Lord can be misleading, since it might suggest that Spain was a place where the Lord's presence would not be felt or where the Lord would not be present. This final clause of verse 3 indicates the intent of Jonah and not an actual fact of the absence of the Lord, and accordingly, it may be necessary to render the clause as "where he thought he would be away from the Lord" or "where he thought the Lord would not be."

Today's English Version

4 But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, and the storm was so violent that the ship was in danger of breaking up. 5 The sailors were terrified and cried out for help, each one to his own god. Then, in order to lessen the danger,^a they threw the cargo^b overboard. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep.

^alessen the danger; or lighten the ship.

^bcargo; or equipment.

The second paragraph of the first chapter should present few problems of translation since the order of events is primarily chronological. However, it is important that the connection between the clauses be made clear, and in some languages it may be necessary to mark the relationships by certain specific connectives. For example, the clause beginning and the storm was so violent may require some such transitional as "as a result" or "so." The first sentence in verse 5 can be marked as "because of this" or "therefore." Finally, the transitional element meanwhile may require some expansion, for example, "during this time" or "while this was happening." It is important to indicate

Revised Standard Version

4 But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god; and they threw the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep.

that the final sentence specifies an event which takes place during the time of the storm, including the terror of the sailors, their prayers, and finally their throwing over of the cargo.

1.4 But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, and the storm was so violent that the ship was in danger of breaking up.

Hebrew sentences generally begin with the verb and then state the subject. Sometimes the subject precedes the verb for emphasis, but in this sentence but the LORD sent the change in order is due to a so-called circumstantial clause.³ This is marked by but in TEV and some other translations. The verb translated sent (TEV), "let loose" (NEB), "flung" (Berkeley), "unleashed" (JB), implies a degree of violence and suddenness or unexpectedness. It is only used 14 times in the Old Testament and four of these are in this chapter (verses 4,5,12,15). It is wrong to avoid the mention of God's agency in sending the storm, as in Winding Quest: "out at sea they ran into a hurricane."

It is sometimes quite impossible to speak of "the Lord sending a strong wind." A verb such as "send" can be used in speaking of persons but not of physical events. Therefore, it may be necessary to render the first part of verse 4 as "the Lord caused a strong wind to blow so that there was a storm." In many languages there are relatively technical terms for a "strong wind," but in some cases the equivalent is simply "violent storm." In other instances it may be a "fast wind" or "a whipping wind."

The phrase on the sea must sometimes be rendered as "against the sea" or "across the waves."

The verb translated was in danger of normally has the meaning "think, plan," and nowhere else in the Old Testament is it used, as here, with an inanimate subject. Moffatt, in fact, goes so far as to say "the ship thought she would be broken," but such personification misrepresents the mind of the author. The personification of trees in Judges 9.8-15 and 2 Kings 14.9 occurs in contexts where the allegorical nature of the material is clearly evident, but that is certainly not true here. Luther, Smith-Goodspeed, by use of impersonal or passive forms, succeed in retaining the verb used in the Hebrew, but with no overt admission of a change in vowel-points. Such a change, from the active to the passive voice of the intensive form of the verb, is advocated by G. R. Driver.⁴ NEB JB RSV, by using the verb "threatened," are able to retain the ship as the subject of an active verb, but the Hebrew verb in question does not normally bear this meaning. In English it can be used metaphorically without the reader being under the impression that the ship used threats to intimidate its passengers, but this may not be

possible in other languages. Another possibility, close to TEV, is NAB's "was on the point of..."

It is also possible to render in danger of as "was about to" or "might soon."

Breaking up must be described more specifically in some languages, for example, "would break into many pieces" or "would be beaten by the waves into many pieces."

The sailors were terrified and cried out for help, each one to his own god. Then, in order to lessen the danger,^a they threw the cargo^b overboard. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep.

^alessen the danger; or lighten the ship.

^bcargo; or equipment.

The sailors are represented as foreigners of various nationalities (compare Ezekiel 27.8,9), each with its own god, or gods, to whom the sailors pray or cry out (compare Psa 107.23-28). The English language is able to distinguish false objects of worship from the one true God by using lower case letters for the former and capitals for the latter, but this distinction is not evident when a passage is read aloud. The use of his own helps to make it clear that various gods are being referred to. Although this means of distinguishing them may not be possible in all languages, it is advisable to use the same word for both (see next verse and 2.1). As an Israelite, Jonah is represented as escaping from the LORD, the personal title of Israel's God.

The sailors were terrified should be rendered in such a way as to indicate extreme fear. Such expressions of fear are often expressed as idioms, for example, "their stomachs were in their mouths" or "their hearts had dropped within them."

Rather than use an elliptical expression each one to his own god following the phrase cried out for help, it may be preferable to combine the two into a single expression, for example, "each of the sailors cried out to his own god for help." In some instances to cry out for help must be expressed as direct discourse, for example, "each one of the sailors said to his own god, Help me" or "...Help us." In order to express the urgency of the prayer, especially in view of the tumult of the storm, it may be appropriate to translate "each of the sailors shouted to his own god in prayer, Help us."

The objects thrown overboard are simply "things" in NEB or "goods" in the Bible in Basic English, but cargo in Bible de Jerusalem, JB, and Jewish Publication Society.

The word used is a very general one, so a general expression is suitable in translation (compare Acts 27.19).

The Hebrew does not actually speak of lightening the ship (KJV JB NEB), but literally of "making (something) light from upon them," that is, those on board the ship. Hence TEV in order to lessen the danger, or perhaps "to relieve their anxiety"; so Soncino Books of the Bible: "make matters easier for them."

To lessen the danger may be rendered as "so that they would not be in so much danger," but in certain instances this must be expressed positively, "so that they would be safer."

They threw the cargo overboard may be expressed as "they threw the cargo into the sea" or "what was in the boat they threw into the water."

Another circumstantial clause brings Jonah back on the scene once more; meanwhile, Jonah had gone below... Some translators may prefer introducing this statement earlier, and so follow the chronological order of events. It would be possible to put the last sentence of this paragraph after verse 4, as for example, "So Jonah went below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep." But where it now stands, the sentence serves as a link with the next verse. Stylistically, too, the present position has the advantage of raising the question in the mind of the reader, "But where was Jonah all this time?" Knox brings this out by "and what of Jonah?"

A literal rendering of Jonah had gone below can be misleading since the term below may require the designation of what remains above. It may be necessary, therefore, to say "have gone below the deck." In other languages it may be more appropriate to say "had gone down into the boat" or "had gone down near the bottom of the boat."

Although there is no formal difference in Hebrew between the type of sentence in verse 4 but the Lord sent... and meanwhile, Jonah had gone below here, the structure of the total context indicates that here we are dealing with a pluperfect (KJV "was gone down"), one of several instances in Jonah of a "flashback."

The word for "ship" in the last sentence occurs only here in the Old Testament and appears to imply a vessel that had a top deck. To speak of the hold (Chinese Union Version "cabin") may suggest a more elaborate vessel than this one would be; the word is used of any recess or corner, as of a cave (1 Sam 24.4) or a house (Amos 6.10, Ezek 32.23). Jonah was simply finding the most remote and comfortable place for going quietly to sleep, where he would not be disturbed (contrast the action of Jesus in Mark 4.38). The word for "sleep" used here is not the usual word, but signifies deep sleep, often brought on supernaturally (see Gen 15.12, 1 Sam 26.12). The Septuagint translates the verb as "snore" here and in verse 6--the only two occurrences of the word in the Bible.

Sound asleep may be rendered as "slept hard," but it also may be expressed in terms of the difficulty involved in waking such a person, for example, "he slept so that no one could easily wake him" or "he slept so it was difficult to cause him to awaken." The same concept may also be expressed somewhat idiomatically "he was so much asleep his mind had left him" or "even his spirit was sleeping."

Today's English Version

6 The captain found him there and said to him, "What are you doing asleep? Get up and pray to your god for help. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and spare our lives."

7 The sailors said to each other, "Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger." They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn. 8 So they said to him, "Now, then, tell us! Who is to blame for this? What are you doing here? What country do you come from? What is your nationality?"

9 "I am a Hebrew," Jonah answered. "I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made land and sea." 10b Jonah went on to tell them that he was running away from the LORD.

Three short paragraphs consisting of verses 6-10b are here combined since they represent a discourse unit. The principal problem in this section occurs between verses 6 and 7 where there is a distinct shift in location. It may, therefore, be necessary at the beginning of verse 7 to mark this transition as "then on deck the sailors said..."

It is important in a number of languages to mark very clearly who speaks and the nature of the utterance. For example, in verse 6 the captain asks a question, and therefore, it may be essential to introduce the question by an expression such as "asked him." Similarly, when the sailors address Jonah in verse 8, it may also be important to use an expression such as "ask," for what follows are essentially questions even though the immediately following expression is a command. In a number of languages a response must always be marked as such, and in many instances it is necessary to place a statement of speaking before the direct discourse. Therefore, in verse 9 one may mark the transition

Revised Standard Version

6 So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we do not perish."

7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, on whose account this evil has come upon us? What is your occupation? And whence do you come? What is your country? And of what people are you?" 9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 10b For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

as "Jonah answered, I am a Hebrew." In some languages it may be particularly awkward to insert "Jonah answered" between two parts of an answer. In English the transposition of a verb of speaking from the beginning to the middle of the discourse is stylistically appropriate in certain contexts, but in other languages this would be misleading. In order to mark the sequence between verses 9 and 10, it may be essential in some languages to introduce verse 10 by a temporal adverb such as "then."

1.6

The captain found him there and said to him, "What are you doing asleep? Get up and pray to your god for help. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and spare our lives."

The expression used for captain, literally "chief of the sailors," does not occur anywhere else, but the word for "sailors" occurs also in Ezekiel 27.8,27-29, where NEB has "helmsmen."

The use of the verb "came upon" (NEB) suggests an element of chance in the encounter between the captain and Jonah. The verb for found is not the same as in verse 3, but may equally well imply that the discovery was not the result of a search for the one member of the ship's company who was absent from the "prayer meeting," but simply that the captain went down to fetch something he needed.

The Hebrew idiom which introduces the question here is also found in Psalm 50.16 "What right have you to recite my laws?" (NEB). Jewish Publication Society renders What are you doing asleep? somewhat differently, "How can you be sleeping so soundly!" In any case, the participle is not to be understood as a vocative, "you sleeper" as in KJV RSV. The others on board ship were all busy praying, and that was what Jonah should have been doing.

In some languages What are you doing asleep? can be understood as a relatively senseless question, for obviously Jonah was asleep. The implication is "what business have you to be falling asleep like this when there is something more urgent that you should be doing." This meaning is sometimes communicated by a question such as "Why are you sleeping?" but this question may not carry the connotation of rebuke implied in the Hebrew text.

Here once again there is the problem of the word for "God" (compare verse 5). The implication underlying your god is that each nationality has its own particular deity. By praying to as many as possible, it might be (maybe) that one of them (compare RSV "the god") would take effective action and save the ship. The verb feel sorry for us or "spare us a thought" (NEB) occurs only here in the Hebrew Old Testament, but it is also found in the Aramaic of Daniel 6.4. Prayer would draw God's attention to the situation,

provided, of course, that the God who was responsible for the storm were addressed by name. But the last thing Jonah wanted at this point was that God's attention should be drawn to him (compare Amos 6.10). As so often in the Old Testament, the narrator does not indicate whether the captain's orders were carried out. The reader is left to infer that commands are obeyed, without being specifically told what happens (as in 3.9,10 and 1 Kings 22.27). But we may assume, in view of the following verses, that Jonah at least joined the others on deck. But there is no indication that he obeyed the order to pray; after all, Jonah's sole purpose for being where he was, far out at sea, was to avoid God and have nothing to do with him.

In a number of languages one cannot speak of "your god," since one cannot possess God. In such instances it may be necessary to employ some such expression as "the god whom you worship." As in verse 5, it may also be important to introduce direct discourse at this point, for example, "Get up and pray to your god, Help us."

The possibility expressed by the adverb maybe is rendered in a number of languages by a particular mode of the verb, for example, "he may possibly feel sorry for us." Expressions of sorrow or pity are frequently rendered by idioms, for example, "his heart may go out to us" or "we may cause pain in his heart."

Spare our lives must frequently be expressed in terms of "not causing our deaths," for example, "he may then not cause us to die."

1.7

The sailors said to each other, "Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger." They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn.

"At last" (NEB) implies an interval of time between verses 6 and 7, but this is not necessary to the narrative. In any event, the scene shifts from the hold, where Jonah was lying, to the sailors on deck. Prayer had so far achieved nothing; perhaps if they could find out who was to blame for the storm, some other remedy might be found. NEB and Basic English follow KJV in a rather literalistic use of the word "come." But the Hebrew word is merely an introductory signal to indicate that a suggestion is being put forward (compare 2 Kings 5.5 KJV). Often languages use other expressions, such as "look!" to introduce a proposal for action. JB with "come on" is certainly more idiomatic than NEB.

Because of the shift of location and at least some period of time involved in the transition between verses 6 and 7, it may be important to introduce verse 7 by "then the sailors said" or "later, after Jonah had joined them on deck, the sailors said."

Let's draw lots. Every culture has its own method of determining who is to be held responsible in a situation such as this, for example, tossing a coin (Winding Quest "let's toss up"), or drawing straws from a bundle. Jonah's name was drawn implies a situation where names were written on pieces of wood.

The techniques of divination differ very widely and therefore expressions related to such methods may be quite diverse, for example, "throw the stones," "drop the pieces of wood;" or "scatter the feathers." In some instances the appropriate expression would be "let us consult the spirits" or "let us ask the gods."

In any event, it was believed (compare Prov 16.33) that God, or the gods, would be able to control the "luck of the draw" in such a way as to indicate who is to blame. This represents a somewhat uncommon way of saying in Hebrew "on whose account," by using a shortened form of the relative particle. The superstitious outlook of the sailors is implied by NEB's reference to "this bad luck."

Who is to blame may be rendered in some languages as a causative, for example, "who has caused us to be in such danger" or "who has caused us to almost die."

The verb did in the clause they did so is a typical substitute verb, that is to say, it substitutes for a verb expression such as draw lots. In other languages, however, it may be necessary to repeat the verb, for example, "they consulted the gods."

In place of Jonah's name was drawn, a more typical expression may be "the stick pointed to Jonah" or "the stone was Jonah's" (referring to techniques of divination) or "Jonah was named" or possibly "they learned that it was Jonah."

1.8

So they said to him, "Now, then, tell us!
Who is to blame for this? What are you
doing here? What country do you come from?
What is your nationality?"

This verse contains one of the few textual difficulties in the book. NEB omits the words which are represented in TEV by Who is to blame for this? This was the very question which the drawing of lots was meant to determine; so its repetition is pointless, and the corresponding words are not found in some Hebrew manuscripts and in the best Greek manuscripts, though they may have fallen out by accident.⁵ But it is much more likely that they wrongly found their way into the text as the result of a marginal note explaining the strange expression in verse 7 being accidentally inserted into verse 8. They simply repeat the question raised in the previous verse. KJV and Jewish Publication Society retain the words here in verse 8, but understand them as a participial clause referring to Jonah, "the-

bringer-of-misfortune-upon-us," or "the one who is to blame for all this," so Jewish Publication Society translates "Tell us, you who have brought this misfortune upon us." But to do this strains the Hebrew construction and leaves one word unaccounted for.

It is possible to follow the TEV rendering of the question Who is to blame for this? by assuming that the sailors at this point wished to have Jonah himself admit his blame and thus confirm what the process of divination had already indicated.

The next question, What are you doing here? may be understood in a variety of senses. The Hebrew expression normally refers to work in general, for example, Psalm 107.23 earning their living on the seas, or even God's work in creation (Genesis 2.2,3). So here, NEB has "what is your business?" which may be intended as a general question meaning "what is your occupation?" (so KJV, RSV, Basic English, Zürcher Bibel, Luther) with the implication that his occupation may itself have been an unlucky one and hence displeasing to the gods. But if the meaning is, as in TEV, "What is your business on this ship?" (so JB NAB Smith-Goodspeed), the implication may have been that the sailors were suspicious of the presence among them of an Israelite, since Israelites were not a sea-faring people. This is the sense taken by Knox ("What is your errand?") and Mowinckel⁶ ("What is the purpose of your journey?"). If the word is associated with the similar word meaning "messenger," the meaning here may well be "errand, mission," but that meaning is scarcely found elsewhere (but compare Dan 8.27). The last three questions in the verse are combined into two in TEV: "What country do you come from? What is your nationality?" In some languages it may not be necessary to distinguish between Jonah's nationality, in political terms, and his race, in ethnic terms.

What country do you come from? may be rendered as "where do you make your home?" or "where do you normally live?" or "where is your home?" The question What is your nationality? may be equivalent to "what is your race?" or "what people do you belong to?" or even "what is your tribe?" In a few instances the designation of nationality is expressed in linguistic terms, that is to say, "what is your language?" or even "what is the language of your home?"

1.9

"I am a Hebrew," Jonah answered. "I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made land and sea."

At first, Jonah, who here speaks for the first time in the story, appears to ignore the first question and merely answers the last one. He replies "I am a Hebrew." This is

a term which is seldom used in the Old Testament, which prefers the expression "Israelite." It is frequently used by foreigners, especially Egyptians and Philistines, or by Israelites in speaking to foreigners, as these sailors were.⁷ This is the only place in the Old Testament where someone says "I am a Hebrew," though Joseph implies it in Genesis 40.15. In the New Testament, Paul describes himself as a Hebrew in Philippians 3.5. There is a tendency among translators to render I am a Hebrew as simply "I am a Jew" (for example, LB). Such a rendering is of course technically incorrect, because the term "Jew" refers essentially to persons from the southern part of Israel, not from the northern kingdom. It is important, therefore, to reproduce some kind of transliteration of Hebrew even though this may not appear to be the more common designation of present-day Jews.

The statement I am a Hebrew may, however, require some expansion in certain languages, for example, "my race is Hebrew" or "I belong to a family of Hebrews" or "my nation is called Hebrew."

Jonah had not been asked about his religion, but he volunteers the information that he is a worshiper of (or "one who fears" RSV) Yahweh, the maker of sea and land. Smith-Goodspeed has "I stand in awe of the LORD." The combination of the two parts of his answer may be taken in either of two ways: (1) since he is a Hebrew, he must therefore be a worshiper of Yahweh, or (2) he is a Hebrew, and in the restrictive sense, one of those who worships Yahweh. The first of these two is more likely. Yahweh is the personal name of the God of Israel, and is generally represented in English translations by "the LORD." (JB is an exception in this respect). "The LORD" is a title, whereas Yahweh is a name, which might seem to favor using a name approximating in sound to Yahweh in a modern translation. But against this it may be argued that in the reading of the Scriptures, the Jews have traditionally avoided the use of the sacred name and have substituted the title Adonai, the Lord. This procedure was followed in early translations of the Old Testament, beginning with the Septuagint. Some, for example, LB, would prefer the name Jehovah (see Exo 3.15, 6.3, and the footnotes on those passages in NEB). This is the traditional English method of representing the sacred name, going back to medieval practice, and has been followed in other languages, for example, Chinese. But it is an artificial form which combines the Hebrew consonants of Yahweh with the vowels of adonai, meaning "Lord," and though printed in that form in Hebrew Bibles, is not meant to be pronounced in that way.

Though there would be certain distinct advantages in reproducing Yahweh as a proper name, translational practice is generally opposed to this, especially since the term Yahweh has been associated with a somewhat more liberal

theological tradition. Therefore, in a number of so-called missionary areas of the world the introduction of such a proper name would seem to be theologically tainted. If, however, one is to employ the expression "Lord," it is important to combine features of importance and control, that is to say, a term should suggest that the person involved is a very important individual and that in some senses he governs or controls individuals who address him as "Lord." An equivalent in some languages is simply "ruler"; in other cases, "master"; and there are some situations in which the closest equivalent indigenous term is "leader." More frequently, however, the equivalent expression is "chief."

Though traditional translations have usually rendered the Hebrew expression literally "I fear the LORD," a literal rendering of such an expression may be quite misleading, since it would suggest, even as it does in English, that people were "scared of the Lord." In this type of context the Hebrew term which is often translated "fear" identifies an individual as the worshiper of a particular god.

In apposition to the name Yahweh, which is placed in an emphatic position, is the descriptive title God of heaven. This title occurs mainly in late books of the Old Testament, but also in Genesis 24.3,7. Heaven is the dwelling-place of God, but this expression God of heaven also suggests the supremacy of Israel's God over all rivals. As God of heaven, he is also concerned with the earth, since he made the sea and the dry land (the Hebrew order here, as against TEV), which makes up its surface (Gen 1.9,10), and hence he controls the storms. The writer leaves us to infer the lack of logic in Jonah's position; how could he hope to escape such a God by traveling westwards?

The phrase God of heaven is most frequently rendered by an expression which means "God in heaven," for a literal rendering of God of heaven might only refer to a god who controls the heavens and nothing else, that is to say, the sky god in contrast with the god of the earth. Fortunately the context makes it quite clear that though this is "the God of heaven," he also made both the land and the sea.

In choosing a term to translate "made," it is important to use an expression which would be appropriate to both land and sea, that is to say, "formed" or "caused to exist." In some cases a term such as "made" refers only to artifacts, and such an expression would normally be inappropriate in speaking of the land and sea.

In some languages there is no generic term for "land," and therefore it may be necessary to use a phrase such as "fields and mountains." In the case of sea, there may be additional problems in distinguishing between (1) bodies of water which are surrounded by land (that is to say, lakes) and (2) bodies of water which are not surrounded, therefore

equivalent more or less to "oceans." It would be this latter term which is appropriate in this context.

1.10b Jonah went on to tell them that he was running away from the LORD.

The indirect discourse in 10b must often be changed to direct discourse, for example, "Jonah went on to tell them, I am running away from the Lord." In many languages, however, one cannot speak of "the Lord," for the relationship between a person and his Lord is an obligatory relationship which must be expressed as "my Lord" or even "the Lord of all people." In this context, however, it would seem more appropriate for Jonah to speak of "my Lord," since he is not assuming that Yahweh is the Lord of these particular sailors.

A literal rendering of running away from could suggest that the Lord was somehow chasing after Jonah. It is important to avoid such an implication, and perhaps this can be done in some instances by saying "I am trying to escape from the Lord," or perhaps, "I am going to a place where the Lord cannot see me."

Today's English Version

10a The sailors were terrified, and said to him, "That was an awful thing to do!"^c 11 The storm was getting worse all the time, so the sailors asked him, "What should we do to you to stop the storm?"

12 Jonah answered, "Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I know it is my fault that you are caught in this violent storm."

^cand said...to do!" or and asked him, "Why did you have to run away like that?"

The two brief paragraphs (10a,11 and 12 in TEV) are combined at this point, since they are so closely related. The first paragraph contains the statements of the sailors directed to Jonah, and the second paragraph consists of Jonah's reply.

Despite certain problems of interpretation (as noted below), the terror of the sailors seems to point not simply to the storm itself, but to the admission by Jonah that he was running away from God, thus implying some rather terrible

Revised Standard Version

10a Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this that you have done!"

11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 He said to them, "Take me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you."

crime, and as a result, bringing upon him and those on the ship great danger from divine retribution or vengeance. Verse 11 may require a transitional element such as "meanwhile" or "while this was happening."

1.10a The sailors were terrified, and said to him, "That was an awful thing to do!"^c

^cand said...to do!" or and asked him, "Why did you have to run away like that?"

Here again the text causes some problems, which are dealt with differently by different translators. The first part of the verse, the sailors were terrified, does not relate very closely to what precedes. Why should the sailors be terrified because Jonah tells them that he worships the maker of the sea and the dry land? Were they afraid that, in spite of their innocence, they too would now be involved in the punishment for his crime? The word "fear" or "be terrified" is the same as that which Jonah has just used for worship. In other words, the author is contrasting the genuine awe of the heathen sailors, who were aware that the storm was sent by Jonah's God, with the merely nominal or conventional confession of faith on the part of the Hebrew Jonah. The sailors are already said to have been afraid in verse 5, but here the description is intensified, which justifies the NEB here "were even more afraid." The form the Hebrew takes is "feared with a great fear." This linking of a noun similar in form to a verb is known as "cognate accusative" and is often used in Hebrew to add strength to the verb itself, for example, Zechariah 1.14, Isaiah 66.10, Psalm 14.5.

If the text of TEV is arranged in the order of the Hebrew, the result would be The sailors were terrified, and said to him "That was an awful thing to do!" (They knew) he was running away from the Lord. Jonah went on to tell them. But TEV has been rearranged in a more logical order, to indicate the sequence of cause and effect. This one verse in Hebrew has three occurrences of the word ki, which, as noted in verse 2, can have the meaning of either "for" or "that." This is brought out clearly in RSV: "For...that...because..." In other words, there is here a double flashback, answering two successive questions:

- (a) Why did the sailors exclaim as they did?
Because they knew Jonah was fleeing from the Lord.
- (b) How did they know this?
Because Jonah had already told them.

Since this final sentence is required to give the reader the clue to the behavior of the sailors, TEV places it at the beginning of the verse, and at the same time supplies an indication of when Jonah's explanation occurred. In other

words, his confession is taken to be a continuation of his speech in verse 9, hence went on to tell them. There is, however, no indication in the Hebrew of the time when Jonah disclosed his "business" (verse 8) or his reason for being on the ship, so the treatment in NEB is quite as legitimate, with its insertion of "already" and its use of the pluperfect "had told." In any event, it was this disclosure on Jonah's part that led the sailors to exclaim as they did (compare Gen 3.13): "That was an awful thing to do!" with specific reference to Jonah's attempt to flee from God (so also RSV, NAB, Smith-Goodspeed, Moffatt, Zürcher Bibel).

On the other hand, the words of the sailors can be taken as a question, as in NEB, "What can you have done wrong?" implying their concern to know what induced Jonah to attempt to flee. This is also the force of the footnote in TEV, "Why did you have to run away like that?" LB, Luther, JB, Chinese Union Version also suppose that the sailors are asking a question. The Hebrew text, however, does not offer an answer to such a question and it is better to treat the words as an exclamation. Mowinckel considers the last sentence to be an addition to the text, arising out of a misunderstanding of the verb "knew," which it interprets as "perceived." There is no textual evidence in favor of the supposition that the last part of the verse is a later addition, brought in to account for the preceding sentence.

1.11

The storm was getting worse all the time,
so the sailors asked him, "What should we
do to you to stop the storm?"

Here again, in this verse, TEV substitutes the historical order for the Hebrew narrative order to give the background to the situation before introducing the words of the sailors. NEB retains the Hebrew order, and as in the previous verse introduces the last sentence with an explanatory "for." Knox gains the same effect by a parenthesis "(Even as they spoke, the waves grew more angry yet)." The description of the storm may, in fact, be a continuation of the words of the sailors, "for the storm is getting worse and worse." Against this, however, is the fact that precisely the same words occur in verse 13, where they cannot be a part of a speech. The sailors, having learned not only that Jonah was the person who was to blame for the storm, but also that he had done something to arouse God's anger, now ask how the situation can be saved. In other words, since he knew what had happened to cause the storm, that ought to qualify him to suggest a remedy.

The Revised Version (RV) shows a clearer understanding than KJV of the Hebrew idiom used here: "more and more tempestuous." In other words, the two verbs used in the Hebrew do not refer to different actions, but to the

progressive intensification of one action.⁸ As against the storm of TEV and NEB, some others follow the Hebrew more closely by referring to the "sea," for example, RSV, JB, Smith-Goodspeed, Moffatt. In neither TEV nor NEB is there any mention of the relation of the storm to the sailors themselves, as in the Hebrew, with its "from upon us." (Compare RSV, Luther, NAB, "for us.")

The question What should we do to you to stop the storm? must often be expressed as a causative, for example, "What should we do to you in order to cause the storm to cease?" or "...cause the wind no longer to blow?"

1.12 Jonah answered, "Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I know it is my fault that you are caught in this violent storm."

Jonah advises the sailors to lift him up and throw him into the sea. Only by this human sacrifice, as it were, could the sea be calmed down from its raging. Luther, NAB, RSV add "that it may quiet down for you," since the expression is the same as in verse 11, with "for you" replacing "for us." The drawing of lots has only confirmed for Jonah what he knew all along, that his own actions had caused the storm which was so dangerous for those who traveled with him. There was still the faint possibility that the loss of his life might save the lives of the innocent people on the ship with him. If he were no longer on the ship, then the lives of all the others on board would be safe.⁹

The pronoun it in the TEV it will calm down is ambiguous, because it could refer to either the storm or the sea. The result would be essentially the same whatever the reference is, but the expression which follows needs to be appropriate to the storm or to the sea depending upon the grammatical reference. If, for example, it refers to the sea, some languages require a rendering such as "it will become smooth again" or "the waves will cease." If, however, the reference is to the storm, a translation such as "it will not blow any more" or "the wind will stop" may be more appropriate.

It is my fault may be expressed as "I am to blame" or "it is because of me."

Though it is quite appropriate in English to speak of "being caught in a storm," this may seem quite strange in some languages, since "being caught" would refer only to a person being caught by another individual or by an animal. Accordingly, it may be important to say "this violent storm has surrounded you" or "this great storm has come upon you." So NAB has, "that this violent storm has come upon you."

Today's English Version

13 Instead, the sailors tried to get the ship to shore, rowing with all their might. But the storm was becoming worse and worse, and they got nowhere. 14 So they cried out to the LORD, "O LORD, we pray, don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! You, O LORD, are responsible for all this; it is your doing." 15 Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and it calmed down at once. 16 This made the sailors so afraid of the LORD that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him.

It is important to mark clearly the transition between verses 12 and 13 by indicating that what the sailors did by trying to get the ship to shore was not what Jonah had asked them to do. This may actually require an expansion of the contrastive conjunction instead so as to read "instead of doing what Jonah had said" or "rather than throw Jonah into the sea, the sailors tried..." The second sentence in verse 13 marks what is called contemporaneous time, that is, something which is going on at the same time as the event of the preceding sentence. This relationship must often be marked as "during that time" or "all that time." As noted below, there is a temporal and spatial problem involved in the transition between verses 15 and 16, and this relationship must be more clearly expressed in some languages.

1.13

Instead, the sailors tried to get the ship to shore, rowing with all their might. But the storm was becoming worse and worse, and they got nowhere.

The heathen sailors are unwilling, however, to save their lives at the expense of Jonah without at least trying some other remedy. So the narrator ensures that the tension mounts as the sailors exert themselves to try and reach the land. Possibly their intention is pictured in terms, at first at least, of setting Jonah on shore to clear the ship of its dangerous cargo. The verb for rowing is not used elsewhere in this sense, presumably because the Old Testament does not relate stories of events at sea. Normally the verb means "dig," as in Amos 9.2. Moffatt has "dug in their oars." In Ezekiel 27.8,26 another verb for rowing is used.

Revised Standard Version

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they cried to the LORD, "We beseech thee, O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood; for thou, O LORD hast done as it pleased thee." 15 So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

1.14

NEB here uses the idiom "to put back to land," in which it resembles the Hebrew by having no object after "bring back" (compare KJV and RSV). Luther interprets the verb differently as "return." The ship is evidently to be understood as the object.

Using the same idiom as in verse 11, the narrator describes how the storm was getting worse and worse. Consequently, their efforts meet with no success, and they got nowhere, an idiom which is no doubt clearer for native speakers of English than for other readers. Basic English makes the meaning clear: "were not able to do so," as does Jewish Publication Society with "but they could not."

The relationship between "getting the ship to shore" and "rowing" must be expressed quite differently in some languages, since the means, namely, the "rowing," is the focal activity and the purpose is to get the ship to shore. Therefore one may restructure the first sentence of verse 13 to read "the sailors rowed with all their strength in order to try to get the ship to shore" or "...to cause the ship to arrive at the shore" or "...to the land." The closest equivalent of rowing may be simply "paddling." It is possible to explain the difference in a footnote, but this is usually not necessary.

The storm was becoming worse and worse must often be expressed as "the wind was blowing faster and faster" or "the wind was all the time blowing stronger."

They got nowhere may be expressed as "they got no closer to land" or "they were as far from land as ever."

1.14

So they cried out to the LORD, "O LORD, we pray, don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! You, O LORD, are responsible for all this; it is your doing."

At this point, the sailors have decided that the "human sacrifice" of Jonah is the only way to stop the storm, and that he must therefore be thrown into the sea, so they turn once again to prayer. This time, however, they pray to Yahweh, since they recognize that he must be responsible for the storm. The prayer is introduced by a particle which Jewish Publication Society translates as "Oh, please, Lord," and which is used in addressing God in Psalms 116 and 118, in Jonah's prayer in 4.2, and in prayers by Moses, Nehemiah, Hezekiah, and Daniel. Apart from these prayers, it occurs only in Genesis 50.17, where Joseph is addressed by his brothers.

In languages which require the expression the LORD to be possessed, that is to say, to indicate who is related to "the Lord," it may be necessary to introduce Jonah, for example, "they cried out to the Lord of Jonah" or "...Jonah's Lord." It would not be appropriate to introduce at this

point "their Lord" because this would assume an almost immediate conversion on the basis of their fears. Though in verse 16 the text suggests that the sailors promised to serve the Lord, this would probably not mean exclusive adherence to Yahweh. Similarly, in the expression O LORD it may be necessary to add the expression "of Jonah" to identify again just who this "chief" was.

The sailors' prayer consists of three parts, of which the first two are practically synonymous and are represented by one petition in TEV: don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! RSV represents the first of the two sentences by "let us not perish for this man's life." They are praying that they will not be held guilty of murder for what they are about to do. NEB is not very clear in expressing the first petition: "do not let us perish at the price of this man's life." This is hardly a natural way of saying in modern English, "do not demand the loss of our lives in exchange for the life of this man," which is presumably what is intended.¹⁰ Perhaps the closest parallel in Hebrew to the usage here is 2 Samuel 14.7; "so that we can put him to death for taking his brother's life" (NEB), where b^enepes occurs, in the sense of "in exchange for the life of," as it does in Deuteronomy 19.21 and here. Note also Genesis 18.28: "Wilt thou destroy the whole city for a mere five men?" (NEB), where the possible destruction of Sodom would be due to the lack of five righteous men out of the required fifty. NEB might have been clearer here if it had said "Do not let this man's death be at the cost of ours," though the meaning intended could be as in Cambridge Bible Commentary on the NEB, page 81: "The sailors do not want to protect Jonah against God's wrath at the risk of their own lives."

The second of the two sentences, which are combined in TEV, is represented in RSV by "and lay not on us innocent blood," in which it follows KJV. These words, in the Hebrew, are best understood as making explicit the first sentence of the prayer. It is not, of course, the blood that is innocent, but the person whose blood is shed, or in the case contemplated here, whose life is to be destroyed. For a prayer which resembles this one in that the people appeal to God to spare them the punishment which might fall upon those responsible for the death of an innocent person, compare Deuteronomy 21.7,8. Jeremiah, on the other hand, asserts that if he is put to death, those responsible will "bring innocent blood" upon themselves (Jer 26.15). In other words, God will hold them guilty of the murder of an innocent man. The principle of protecting "innocent blood" is set out in Deuteronomy 19, especially verse 10, where provision is made for the protection of one who kills another accidentally or without malice. This is the principle to which the sailors appeal here, in that they claim that if they suffer the death penalty for murder, they would be considered guilty, though actually innocent. In a situation like this, Jonah's relatives would be in no position to

avenge his death, but those responsible appeal to God, as the protector of justice, to see to it that they are not punished by him for taking measures designed to ensure the saving of life. So far as they are concerned, Jonah is no enemy against whom they have a grudge, and murder is certainly not their intention (Moffatt "punish us not for a murder"). Winding Quest merely develops the thought of the previous sentence with the idiomatic "don't hold it against us." In various ways, most translations agree with Jewish Publication Society: "Do not hold us guilty of killing an innocent person" (similarly JB and Knox).

But even this apparently straightforward sentence can be interpreted in more ways than one. Are they saying that although Jonah is innocent, they nevertheless have no alternative but to sacrifice his life? Or are they saying that they cannot be to blame for killing an innocent man, since Jonah has been shown to be guilty by his own admission that he has offended Yahweh, as well as by the verdict of the casting of lots? On this understanding of the verse, the sailors are appealing to God not to punish them, since they are only innocent executioners of a wrongdoer and are obeying God's orders.

Whether in these terms or in some other way, the first two elements in the prayer link up with the third, in which the sailors remind God that they are only acting in accordance with his revealed will. Possibly TEV goes too far in suggesting that the sailors are blaming God for what has happened, rather than simply excusing themselves by claiming that the storm and what follows are part of God's will and purpose. The word translated "set purpose" in NEB normally carries with it the suggestion of pleasure (compare KJV, "as it pleases thee"), as in Hosea 6.6, or where people are the subject, it may even be used in such a context as Genesis 34.19 where Shechem is attracted by Dinah.

Punish us with death may be rendered as "cause us to die," and taking this man's life may likewise be rendered as "causing this man to die." Only rarely can one speak of "taking life."

In some languages it would be inappropriate to repeat O LORD after a second person pronoun such as "you." The identification of "you" is perfectly clear in view of the direct address occurring in the previous sentence.

You are responsible for all this may be rendered as "you are the one who has caused all this," and it is your doing may be rendered as "this is what you have done," but the two statements "you have caused all this" and "this is what you have done" may seem to be unnecessarily repetitious. A corresponding emphasis may be expressed by rendering these two statements as a single emphatic utterance, "You yourself are the one who has caused all this to happen."

1.15 Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and it calmed down at once.

This verse recapitulates verse 12 in that, as a result of carrying out Jonah's advice and throwing him into the sea, the storm ceases. The sea is personified here, since the word "raging" (NEB) is used elsewhere only of human beings or of God. So, "the sea was no longer angry" (Basic English). Jonah makes no protest and submits to his fate.

In translating they picked Jonah up, it is important to avoid an expression which would suggest that Jonah had been lying down. It is preferable in a number of languages to say "they grabbed hold of Jonah" or "they took hold of Jonah" or "they took hold of Jonah and lifted him up."

It calmed down at once must be expressed in some languages as a reference to the "waves," therefore, "the waves stopped at once." But in a number of languages it is important to place the temporal expression first, for example, "and at once the sea became calm" or "...without waves."

1.16 This made the sailors so afraid of the LORD that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him.

The same expression is used here as at the beginning of verse 10, except that here the sailors' "fear" is "fear of the LORD." This looks like a later addition to the text, expanding the reference in the last part of the verse to acts of worship. TEV takes "fear" here in the sense of "terror," as do Knox and JB ("dread"), while NEB Moffatt and others think in terms of religious awe. In verse 9 Jonah confesses that he worships Yahweh, but the combination of intense fear (as in verse 10) with worship of God (as in verse 9) is difficult to translate in such a way as to do justice to both elements. For "fear of the LORD" in the sense of "terror," see also 1 Samuel 12.18, 2 Samuel 6.9, and Jeremiah 5.22.

If instead of "fear" or "terror," one interprets the first part of verse 16 as a reference to "awe," one may render the clause this made the sailors so afraid of the LORD as "this made the sailors stand in awe of the Lord." If the reference of the pronoun this must be made more explicit, the clause may be restructured so as to read "what the Lord did caused the sailors to be in awe of him." Then, the resulting clause introduced by that may be expressed as a separate sentence, "as a result, they offered a sacrifice..."

The mention of offering sacrifice might indicate that the narrator thinks in terms of such animals as the sailors might have had with them on board in preparation for a long voyage, or he may be indicating that as a result of the calming of the storm, the ship soon reached dry land, and they offered sacrifice there. Sacrifice was the normal

expression of worship, and here the worshipers are foreigners, offering sacrifices to the God of Israel, an element which is omitted by TEV. As frequently, TEV subordinates one element in the verse to another instead of following the Hebrew pattern of coordinating the various actions and leaving the reader to supply the relation between them.

Since the sacrifice probably took place somewhat later than the calming of the sea, it may be important to introduce a temporal factor, for example, "and as a result, they later offered a sacrifice."

Offered a sacrifice may be expressed as "killed an animal as an act of worship to the Lord" or "...as a way of worshiping the Lord." Sometimes the relationship between the sacrifice and worship may be explained quite precisely as "they killed an animal as a gift to the Lord." In this context also it may be necessary to add "the Lord of Jonah." If one uses "their Lord," it might very well refer to some pagan deity.

The final sentence in the verse again refers to a standard element in worship, "made vows" (NEB). TEV goes beyond the normal meaning of this expression in saying and promised to serve him (so also Winding Quest and LB). The reaction of the sailors to the wonders they had experienced is not to be understood in terms of a "conversion" to Israel's religion or the recognition that Yahweh alone is the one true God. Rudolph¹¹ points out the irony of a situation in which Jonah fails to take the initiative in any stage of the developments and has to have his confession of faith dragged out of him, and yet in spite of him the sailors are "filled with the fear of the LORD."

In making a vow, a person would say in effect to God "If you fulfil my request, I will worship you with an offering." Here the sailors were already saved from danger, so perhaps they are thought of as fulfilling vows made during the time of their danger.

Promised to serve him may therefore be rendered as "paid their vows to the Lord" or "gave to the Lord what they had promised him in their vows" or "...what they have vowed to give him."

Today's English Version

17 At the LORD's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Revised Standard Version

17^a And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

^aHeb Ch 2.1

1.17 At the LORD's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

The relationship between the LORD's command and the action of the large fish may be expressed as "the Lord commanded a large fish to swallow Jonah." There is, however, a problem of temporal sequence at this point since the swallowing of Jonah took place immediately upon his being cast into the sea, and the sacrifice performed by the sailors no doubt took place somewhat later. It may therefore be important to introduce verse 17 by an appropriate temporal transition, for example, "when Jonah was cast into the sea."

In Hebrew Bibles, this is the first verse of chapter two, and this numbering is followed by Jewish Publication Society.

From the point of view of the narrator, the problem with which he is faced is that of getting Jonah to his destination, now that the sea has been calmed by his being thrown into it.

So a miracle takes place to renew Jonah's call to the Lord's service. The verb used here with the LORD as subject occurs three more times in this book (4.6,7,8). It occurs in this form only in the later writings of the Old Testament. Apart from "command" as in TEV, several other translations have been suggested, for example, "provided" (Jewish Publication Society), "sent for" (Luther), "appointed" (RSV). The use of "prepared" by KJV, following the tradition of the Vulgate, suggests that God produced one particular fish for this special occasion, (compare Soncino, "had ready"). In much the same way JB has "Yahweh had arranged that a great fish should be there to swallow Jonah." So this is the first of several occasions in the book where this verb is used to suggest that God arranged events in the course of Jonah's mission to fit in with the divine purpose, whether the events were favorable as here and in 4.6, or unfavorable as in 4.7,8. God had already been in control of the sea and the storm, and now he is shown to be in control of the large fish.

No indication is given of the kind of fish that swallows Jonah, apart from its size. It was not a whale, which is not a fish in the first place. The word used in Matthew 12.40 is the same as is used in the Septuagint here. It is usually translated "whale," though it has a wider range of meaning, since it is also applied to sea-monsters (so NEB here) or large fish. Knox here uses the expression "sea-beast."

Whatever the nature of this creature, it is represented as being more obedient to the Lord, both here and in 2.10, than Jonah was. The same contrast between the disobedience of man and the submission of animals is found in Isaiah 1.3 and Jeremiah 8.7.

The reference to three days and nights is taken up in Matthew 12.40 as a foreshadowing of the period during which Jesus remained in the tomb. Here, however, it is simply one of the ingredients of the story introduced to make the period more specific. "Three" is sometimes an indefinite low number in the Old Testament (for example, Hos 6.2). The same period of time is found in 1 Samuel 30.12 and Esther 4.16; in both of these passages the implication is that three days was a long period to do without food.

There is no need to see in this incident an allegory of the exile based on Jeremiah 51.34. Nor is anything to be gained by trying to rationalize this account of an unusual incident by suggesting, as has been done, that on reaching dry land Jonah was accommodated at an inn named "The Fish." Neither should any significance, for translational purposes, be attached to the variation between the masculine form of "fish" here and the feminine form in the next verse.

C H A P T E R 2

Today's English Version

Revised Standard Version

Jonah's Prayer

- 1 From deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God:
- 2 "In my distress, O LORD, I called to you,
and you answered me.
From deep in the world of the dead
I cried for help, and you heard me.
- 3 You threw me down into the depths,
to the very bottom of the sea,
where the waters were all around me,
and all your mighty waves rolled over me.
- 4 I thought I had been banished from your presence
and would never see your holy Temple again.
- 5 The water came over me and choked me;
the sea covered me completely,
and seaweed wrapped around my head.
- 6 I went down to the very roots of the mountains,
into the land whose gates lock shut forever.^d
But you, O LORD my God,
brought me back from the depths alive.
- 7 When I felt my life slipping away,
then, O LORD, I prayed to you,
and in your holy Temple you heard me.
- 8 Those who worship worthless idols
have abandoned their loyalty to you.

- 1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, 2 saying,
"I called to the LORD, out of my distress,
and he answered me;
out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
and thou didst hear my voice.
- 3 For thou didst cast me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas,
and the flood was round about me;
all thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
- 4 Then I said, 'I am cast out from thy presence;
how shall I again look upon thy holy temple?'
- 5 The waters closed in over me,
the deep was round about me;
weeds were wrapped about my head
- 6 at the roots of the mountains.
I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever;
yet thou didst bring up my life from the Pit,
O LORD my God.
- 7 When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the LORD;
and my prayer came to thee,
into thy holy temple.
- 8 Those who pay regard to vain idols
forsake their true loyalty.
- 9 But I with the voice of thanks-giving
will sacrifice to thee;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Deliverance belongs to the LORD!"

9 But I will sing praises to
you;
I will offer you a
sacrifice
and do what I have promised.

Salvation comes from the LORD!"

10 Then the LORD ordered the
fish to spit Jonah up on the beach,
and it did.

*d*THE LAND WHOSE GATES LOCK SHUT
FOREVER: A reference to the world
of the dead (see 2.2).

Jonah's Prayer. The inclusion of Jonah's prayer at this point in the text raises a number of questions.

In the first place, it can be said that the narrative does not require any of the material in the first nine verses of this chapter, since it flows naturally without interruption from 1.17 to 2.10. This section is, in fact, omitted by Winding Quest.

Nevertheless, this poem and its prose introduction in verse 1 are undoubtedly a part of the Hebrew text of Jonah from the earliest period at which we have any record of the book's existence. We are entitled to suppose, for want of any contrary evidence, that the author considered some reaction on the part of Jonah to his experience to be appropriate.

The wording of the poem does not seem to fit the circumstances in which Jonah finds himself. It is far more suitable as an expression of thanksgiving by someone rescued from a terrifying experience than as a prayer for help from inside a fish or sea-monster.

As a result many scholars have concluded that these verses were an insertion after the completion of the book, but before it became part of the canonical Old Testament, or that the original narrator used an earlier prayer which seemed superficially to meet his requirements, since it mentioned the very bottom of the sea, mighty waves and seaweed, but which was in fact a prayer of thanksgiving and not an appeal for help.

It has often been observed that the wording of this prayer resembles not only that of the Psalms in general, but actually echoes very closely individual passages in that book, as will be noted in connection with each verse. In the opinion of most scholars, the prayer, as it stands, is a good example of Hebrew psalm-poetry, in which the poet drew upon the regular liturgical language common to the book of Psalms and other poems in the Old Testament in such a way as to fit this situation. It may be a psalm that had been composed at an earlier date, but had not been incorporated in the collection of psalms which we now have. In

10 And the LORD spoke to the
fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon
the dry land.

support of this latter view about the age of the prayer is the fact that its language reflects an early period in Hebrew literature, unlike much of the prose material in the rest of the book.

The opening words, in which the Lord is not directly addressed, resemble Psalm 118.5, which presupposes an audience which listens to the psalmist's confession of faith. The same is true of Psalm 18.6, and in Psalm 120.1 almost exactly the same words occur in the Hebrew, but in a different order. All these, and other echoes of psalm-language in this prayer, lend weight to the belief of many that the writer was drawing upon a common stock of liturgical language, put together into a unit either by himself or by some predecessor.¹

The structure of Jonah's prayer is not as evident as in the case of a number of the psalms, but the first part of verse 2 does state the fundamental theme, that is to say, that Jonah called in his distress and the Lord answered him. What follows are six statements introduced by expressions which suggest movement down or away from the Lord or loss of life. Note, for example, the phrases from deep in the world of the dead, you threw me down into the depths, I thought I had been banished from your presence, the water came over me and choked me, I went down to the very roots of the mountains and when I felt my life slipping away. Only in verse 7 is there the suggestion of a significant transition, for it is here that Jonah prays to the Lord and is assured of a response.

Verse 8 consists of a rather strange insertion about pagans who worship worthless idols, and does not relate naturally to the verses that precede it. Verse 9, however, shows the contrast between pagan worship and the worship of the Lord, and the final expression salvation comes from the Lord! is appropriate to Jonah's subsequent deliverance, and constitutes an appropriate introduction to verse 10, in which the Lord ordered the fish to throw Jonah up on the beach.

2.1 From deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God:

This verse marks a turning-point in the book, as Jonah himself now prays. Up to this point there is no indication that he followed the example of the heathen sailors by praying on board ship. The usual verb "to pray" is only used twice in the book, here and in 4.2; elsewhere the verb used is "to call."

A literal rendering of from deep inside the fish might suggest that Jonah was at "the bottom of the fish." This, of course, is not necessarily implied; it simply means that Jonah was "well inside the fish." Therefore, an equivalent

2.2

rendering might be "from the very inside of the fish" or "from right there inside the fish."

The expression his God implies in this context the existence of other gods, as in 1.5, where "god" has no capital letter, the point being that there the reference is to the gods of the heathen sailors, but here to the Lord, the God of Israel. The genitive here bears no sense of exclusive possession, but simply means the God whom Jonah worshiped (1.9). As a prayer from inside the fish, the language of thanksgiving may seem somewhat premature.

For languages which require a possessive relationship with "Lord," it may be possible to translate "his Lord, that is, his God." In other instances a more satisfactory rendering may be simply "his Lord God." A rendering such as "his Lord who is God" would presume a kind of exclusive meaning of monotheism which may be judged inappropriate for this type of context. At the same time one must recognize that in a number of languages one cannot speak of "his God" but simply as "the God whom he worshiped," since it may be quite inappropriate to speak of "possessing God." Compare the statement made in connection with verse 5 of chapter 1.

2.2

2 "In my distress, O LORD, I called to you,
and you answered me.

From deep in the world of the dead
I cried for help, and you heard me.

At this point TEV quotes the wording of the prayer, though Hebrew introduces the prayer by "and he said," which can, of course, be rendered by some such expression as "saying" or "as follows."

The form of TEV obscures the fact that there is a change half-way through the verse from a statement about the Lord in the 3rd person to an acknowledgment of his help in the 2nd person. A similar change occurs in verse 7, but for the sake of clarity, TEV keeps to 2nd person throughout, as being appropriate for a prayer. In view of the fact that the Lord is referred to by a second person singular pronoun you, it may be wrong in some languages to employ a title of direct address as in the TEV O LORD. This may be particularly inappropriate in view of the fact that there is a mention in verse 1 of the prayer as being addressed to the LORD.

The phrase in my distress may be rendered in a number of languages by a clause "when I was in great trouble" or in a more figurative expression, "when great troubles overwhelmed me."

The tense of the verbs I called and you answered has been interpreted as implying that the prayer is uttered by someone looking back in gratitude to a deliverance that has already taken place, not looking forward to some future rescue. Knox evades this difficulty by using the present tense.

In some languages a literal rendering of you answered me may imply merely that God responded verbally. This is what is specifically meant in this passage, but the implication is of course much greater, and a literal rendering might suggest that God only answered verbally and paid no further attention to Jonah. Obviously the Lord answered by helping; therefore it may be better in some instances to render you answered me as "you came to my help" or "you answered by helping me."

In the second half of the Hebrew text, the Lord is addressed directly, but in other respects, it is a close parallel to the first half in that it speaks of the worshiper's prayer arising out of his dangerous situation, and the answer he receives from the Lord.

The prayer is described as coming from deep in the world of the dead, or "out of the belly of Sheol" (NEB). In other words the worshiper is pictured as having "one foot in the grave," to use an English idiom, or in "the jaws of death," as Luther expresses it. The expression used in TEV, the world of the dead corresponds to the Hebrew word Sheol (for example, Smith-Goodspeed "heart of Sheol"). The word occurs often in the Psalms and the book of Job to refer to the place to which all dead people go. It is represented as a dark place, in which there is no activity worthy of the name. There are no moral distinctions there, so "hell" (KJV) is not a suitable translation, since that suggests a contrast with "heaven" as the dwelling-place of the righteous after death. In a sense, "the grave" in a generic sense is a near equivalent, except that Sheol is more a mass grave in which all the dead dwell together.

This is by no means the only place where Sheol is personified in such a way as to be represented as having bodily parts. Here "belly" (NEB) simply means the innermost part, hence deep in the world of the dead in TEV. This is the only place where Sheol is said to have a "belly" or a "womb"; the Hebrew word may have either meaning. Sheol has a "throat" and "jaws" in Isaiah 5.14 (NEB), and there we find the same kind of imagery, with the underworld represented as a vast cavern into which one may go down, but out of which it is not possible to come up. Sheol has a mouth (Psa 141.7) with which it can swallow people (Prov 1.12), and it has a great appetite (Hab 2.5, Prov 27.20). The use of this particular imagery may have been considered suitable here in view of Jonah's imprisonment in the interior of the fish, though the word used in Hebrew is not the same as in the previous verses.

The world of the dead is rendered in a number of languages as "the place where the dead are" or "...dwell." A literal rendering of world might suggest that there are two distinct earths, one for the living and another for the dead. An adequate equivalent for deep may be simply "down in the place where the dead are."

The use of the perfect tense "hast heard" in NEB ("have heard" in JB) is not based on any difference in the form of the Hebrew verb from that of "cried," but may be justified by supposing that Jonah here is speaking of an action in the past continuing into the present. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, those in the world of the dead are completely cut off from God, with no possibility of any prayer being heard (for example Psa 88.5,10,11, Isa 38.18).

I cried for help must frequently be rendered as "I shouted for help" or "I shouted to you, Help me." One should avoid a rendering of cried which would suggest "weeping" or "lamenting."

2.3 You threw me down into the depths,
 to the very bottom of the sea,
 where the waters were all around me,
 and all your mighty waves rolled over me.

The connection between this verse and the preceding one is so obscure that T. H. Robinson supposes that some words, such as a confession of sin, have dropped out between the two verses. The form of the Hebrew verb with which the verse begins is such as to suggest that the action it describes follows upon that mentioned at the end of verse 2. But in fact it fills out the description of the distress mentioned at the beginning of the prayer. Mowinckel, Smith-Goodspeed, Moffatt, KJV, and A. R. Johnson all have the pluperfect here, though such a usage is exceptional. Clearly there is a contrast between the favorable treatment received at the end of verse 2, and the unfavorable treatment mentioned here.

The imagery changes here, and the reference to the sea and the waters would make it seem a suitable prayer for Jonah to use. But although the form of the image is changed, the poet is still thinking of the world of the dead, as can be seen from verses 6 and 7 of Psalm 88, a poem which expresses most intensely the despair of someone in danger of death. In Psalm 69 also, the references to the deep waters in verses 1,2,14,15 express the imagery of impending death.

The word translated "depths" may be a later addition to the poem, as it makes the line unduly long and upsets the regular 3/2 pattern in the poetic meter. Apart from A. R. Johnson, Mowinckel, and Moffatt, modern translations retain the word. It may well be an explanatory interpretation of the word waters or "flood" (NEB), since that word normally means "river," but is used here in a specialized sense to refer to the ocean currents which are mentioned, for example, in Psalms 24.2 and 93.3 (where TEV has "ocean depths").

The word depths is often used in poetry with the same meaning as the words that follow, that is, "the heart of the sea," for example, Psalms 68.22, 88.6, (NEB "depths")

and Micah 7.19. Just as in the previous verse Sheol is said to have a "belly," so here the sea has a "heart," as it does in Exodus 15.8 and Psalm 46.2. NEB understands this to refer to somewhere far from land, but usage elsewhere in the Bible suggests rather that the poet is thinking of the bottom of the sea.

Into the depths, to the very bottom of the sea must be rendered in such a way as to indicate that this involves a kind of apposition, for example, "into the deep parts of the ocean, that is, at the very bottom of the sea," but such an explanatory type of apposition may be both cumbersome and misleading. Therefore, it is sometimes possible to combine the two expressions the depths and the very bottom of the sea into a single phrase, for example, "down to the very deep part of the sea" or "down to the lowest part of the sea."

As already noted, the "flood" to which RSV refers is not the flood associated with Noah, but one more word expressing the overwhelming sensation of helplessness likely to be felt by someone in Jonah's situation. This same type of imagery is used in the Psalms, particularly in Psalms 69.1,2,14,15; 88.6,7,17, where it is unnecessary to suppose that the psalmist was actually in danger of drowning. So also here, the imagery of being overwhelmed is felt by the author to fit the situation of someone who was literally in the depths of the sea, as Jonah was in the fish.

At the creation God subdued the watery chaos that was there in the beginning (Gen 1.2), and by dividing the dry land from the sea (Gen 1.6-10), he made life on earth possible. Hence, when the poet feels that these mighty waters were closing round him, he is very conscious of the imminent threat of death. In fact, in the next line this thought is intensified, and the mighty waves roll over him, with the same nightmare effect as in Psalms 69 and 88 and Lamentations 3.54. The use of the genitive often presents a problem in translation, and here the waves are referred to as "your waves." Either the poet is thinking of the waves as having been sent by God against the psalmist, or more probably as being under his control, since he conquered the ocean at the creation. In Psalm 42.7, which is identical with this line, the two words "waves" and "breakers" (NEB) are used, as they are here, hence "mighty waves" in TEV here, in which the two nouns are combined into a single phrase. This is the only actual quotation from the Psalms and is regarded by many as suggesting a later insertion.

In a number of languages one cannot speak of waters in a plural form. Since water is a mass, it is generally referred to by a singular term, as in English "water." Accordingly, where the waters were all around me must be expressed as "where there was water all around me." In some languages, however, it is far better to speak of a person as being in the water rather than the water being around the person.

Accordingly, one may have to translate "where I was there in the water" or "...deep in the water" or "...deep in the ocean."

The possessive relationship in your mighty waves may be expressed as a causative, for example, "the mighty waves you have caused" or "the large waves which you caused." If the interpretation of control over the mighty waves is preferred one may render this expression as "the great waves which you control" or "...command."

In a number of instances it is difficult to speak of "waves rolling"; they may, however, be described as "flooding over" or "spreading over" or even "tumbling over," though in some cases a more general term such as "move" may be required, for example, "your great waves are moving above me."

2.4 I thought I had been banished from your presence
 and would never see your holy Temple again.

Most translations introduce a fresh sentence here, but a closer unity is effected by Luther, with its "so that I thought..." and Knox's "till it seemed." In any event, here as often elsewhere, Hebrew expresses "I thought..." by using the verb "to say," hence, "to say to one's self." NEB uses the past passive construction here, but TEV introduces the pluperfect passive. The choice of one or the other depends on whether, as in NEB, the poet is thinking of himself as being in a state of banishment or is looking back on the banishment as having taken place previously.

In view of the close parallel between this verse and Psalm 31.22, where the verb differs by one letter from that used here for banished, it has been suggested that here, too, the meaning should be "cut off" rather than "driven away," especially since the verb which stands here never has the meaning of "driven away" in this passive form, but always "tossed about." But in most languages the difference in translating the verbs in Psalm 31 and here would be minimal.

For languages which do not permit a passive expression, it may be difficult to render adequately the phrase I had been banished. This may be rendered as an active expression with God as the subject, for example, "I thought you had banished me." This would not be out of keeping with the theme of verse 3, you threw me down into the depths, but it may be useful to avoid the indication of an agent, in which case one might render the first part of verse 4 as "I thought I would never again return" or "...could never again return," in which case from your presence would need to be rendered as "to your presence" or "to you."

"Sight" (NEB) is perhaps preferable to presence, since the Hebrew word used here refers to the eyes. As so often

in the Old Testament the world of the dead is envisaged as being out of touch with God (for example, Isa 38.11,18).

The major textual difficulty in this psalm relates to the first word in the second half of verse 4. It involves the difference between a positive and a negative assessment of the possibility of the worshiper ever recovering from his present disaster. The positive meaning follows the Hebrew text as vocalized, for example, KJV "yet I will look again..." This reading is found also in RV, Knox, Berkeley, NAB², New American Standard Bible and is defended by A. R. Johnson² who claims: "The reading of the Masoretic text suggests an emotional content wholly in keeping with the situation which the psalmist contemplates." If, however, instead of the positive word "yet" or "nevertheless," we read a word of very similar sound meaning "how," we arrive at the sense understood by NEB and TEV, and would never see. This continues the thought of the previous line and continues to be subordinate to "I thought." This is the reading followed by RSV, Luther, Zürcher Bibel, Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, JB, Basic English, LB, and Mowinckel. Similarly Jewish Publication Society asks "would I ever gaze again...?" although it does not acknowledge a departure from the vocalized Hebrew text, which is also true of NEB. The variant is based upon the reading "how?" in the Greek translation of Theodotion, who would have been translating from a Hebrew text with no vowel markings.

A strong case can, however, be made for retaining the Hebrew text as it stands, in which case the worshiper brings out the contrast between his fears that God had banished him from his sight and the confident assurance that in spite of everything he has been able to enjoy worship in the Temple. This interpretation does not suit the immediate situation in which Jonah finds himself, but is perfectly suitable for one who is giving thanks for his salvation; "yet, in spite of my despair, here I am in the Temple once again." The main argument against this reading is the point in the poem at which such a confident assertion stands. It interrupts the description of disaster which otherwise continues from the beginning of verse 3 to the middle of verse 6. In spite of this, however, one can understand the poet expressing this kind of confidence in a setting where his previous danger is recollected from a position of safety. The psalm thus contains an alternating blend of cries of distress and expressions of a determined faith, as here.

A rendering of would never see your holy Temple again is perfectly appropriate if it suggests not only seeing, but also being in the holy Temple again. It is not merely seeing the Temple from a distance, but participating in Temple worship.

In many languages Temple is rendered as "your house" or "where you dwell." In verse 4 the reference is to the Temple in Jerusalem, but in verse 7 the reference may be to the Temple of God in heaven.

In this context the term rendered holy should be one which is appropriate to any object which is dedicated exclusively to the service or worship of God, applicable, for example, in such phrases as "holy vestments" or "holy garments" or "holy incense." If there is no term which seems satisfactory for this context, it is of course possible to employ a descriptive phrase so that holy Temple could be rendered as "the building dedicated to your worship" or "...consecrated to your worship."

2.5,6

The water came over me and choked me;
 the sea covered me completely,
 and seaweed wrapped around my head.
 I went down to the very roots of the mountains,
 into the land whose gates lock shut forever.^d
 But you, O LORD my God,
 brought me back from the depths alive.

^dTHE LAND WHOSE GATES LOCK SHUT FOREVER:
A reference to the world of the dead (see 2.2).

Since the present verse-division is unlikely to be in accordance with the thought of the poet himself, it is best to take these two verses together.

The imagery of the water is continued in this verse, and the psalmist describes how he was overwhelmed by the sea, in language resembling Psalms 18.4 and 69.1. According to KJV "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul." Instead of "soul," NEB, Basic English, Mowinckel, and JB have "neck," or "throat," and TEV understands the Hebrew in the same sense by using the word choked. The Hebrew word nephesh has a variety of meanings in the Old Testament.³ It has the meaning of "throat" in such passages as Isaiah 5.14, Psalms 69.1, 105.18, and Proverbs 23.7 and that appears to be the meaning here rather than "life" as in NAB. From this sense of "throat" may have developed the meaning "breath," as in Job 41.21. Since "breath" indicates the presence of "life," the word can also have this latter meaning, as in Proverbs 7.23, Genesis 37.21 and Lamentations 2.12. Frequently the word merely stands for "person" or "self" or even a personal pronoun, as in Job 16.4. So there is some justification for RSV: "the waters closed in over me," though the parallel in Psalm 69.1 argues for the correctness of NEB and TEV here.

It may be wrong in some languages to speak of water as "coming over" a person. A more satisfactory expression may be "the water flooded over me." On the other hand, it may seem better to say, "I sank down into the water."

A term to render choked should not refer to the choking of a person by some violent squeezing of the throat, but choking as the result of being immersed in a liquid. Choked

me must therefore be rendered often as "drowned me" or "took away my breath."

The "ocean" in the second line (NEB) is the word which is used at the beginning of the story of Creation in Genesis 1.2, and in the account of the Flood (Gen 7.11, 8.2), in all of which passages NEB uses the word "abyss." In other words, the Flood was a combination of rain falling from above and subterranean springs bursting out from below. It is also the word used, as here and in Habakkuk 3.10, for the deepest parts of the sea.

In RSV JB and NEB the last line of verse 5 is combined with the first line of verse 6, partly for reasons of the poetic structure of the psalm, and I went down is taken along with the line that follows. The division of the Hebrew text into verses came about at a comparatively late date, so the punctuation need not determine our understanding of the sense. In this sentence the poet continues to intensify the picture of someone who is overwhelmed by the ocean. No longer is his head above water, since seaweed is already smothering him. The word "weeds" is the same as is used in the story of the childhood of Moses (Exo 2.3,5), and in the name for "the Sea of Reeds" in Exodus 10.19 etc. It is used here only in reference to the vegetation at the bottom of the sea, so that this is a more realistic description of being overwhelmed by water than any passage in the Psalms. The closest parallel there is perhaps to be found in Psalm 18.5, with its imagery of the victim being entangled in the cords of the underworld.

A literal rendering of seaweed wrapped around my head may seem strange, since it would suggest that the seaweed purposely engaged in a particular action. One may need, therefore, to use some such expression as "there was seaweed wrapped around my head." A descriptive equivalent of seaweed may be "plants that grow in the sea."

TEV follows the traditional verse-division and takes I went down with the words that precede it, to the very roots of the mountains. However, the prefix is sometimes to be understood as meaning "at" rather than "to," for example, Numbers 11.10, "at the door of his tent." Taken in this way, as in NEB, "the troughs of the mountains" would refer to the place where the poet feels himself to be entangled in seaweed. The mountains, such as Carmel, which stand on the sea-coast, are pictured here as having their roots far down at the bottom of the sea; compare Psalm 46.2. There they lie anchored, beneath the water, at the approaches to the underworld.

The next two lines in NEB correspond to the second line of verse 6 in TEV, which interprets "I went down" as repeated from the first line. In other words, the land described here in TEV is in apposition to the very roots of the mountains in the preceding line.

The figurative expression the very roots of the

mountains may not be possible in some languages since only trees may be said to have roots. It may, however, be possible to say "I went down to where the mountains begin" or "I went down into the sea to the place where the mountains begin." In some languages the base of a mountain may be spoken of as "the belly of the mountain" or "the skirt of the mountain" or "the buttocks of the mountain."

In RSV NEB and TEV the relative pronoun "whose" is supplied, though it is not expressed in the Hebrew. This construction without the relative, is perfectly normal in Hebrew,⁴ but this particular example has seldom been so understood by other translators, with the exception of Moffatt: "a land where bars shut behind me forever." The "world" to which NEB refers is, of course, the world of the dead. Note that NEB differs from TEV here in understanding the statement as applying more particularly to the victim whose thoughts are expressed in the poem "would hold me fast." In this it follows more closely the Hebrew, which does not speak simply of a place which can never be left when once it is entered, but of one which would hold the person captive forever. A. R. Johnson is formally closer to the Hebrew with "I went down to the land whose bars were to be about me forever," since there is no verb such as lock or "hold me fast" (NEB), but a preposition, the same as in 2 Kings 4.21.

By use of a figurative equivalent TEV speaks of the gates of the underworld as being permanently locked to keep those who are already there inside, but not, of course, to bar the entry of newcomers. This thought of the permanence of one's stay in Sheol is met with frequently in the Old Testament (for example, 2 Samuel 12.23, Job 7.9,10, 10.21, 17.16, Isa 38.10 etc.). The NEB is closer to the Hebrew in speaking of the "bars" which kept the gates of the underworld effectively closed. KJV and other translations speak of "bars," but by failing to understand that this is a reference to the underworld and not to the earth itself, the effect is confusing. Thus Smith-Goodspeed has "The earth with its bars was against me forever," whatever that may mean. With greater freedom Knox has "the very bars of earth my unrelenting prison." NAB makes it clear that the reference is to "the bars of the nether world," but Jewish Publication Society retains "the bars of the earth," again with no explanation of the meaning as a reference to the world of the dead. This phrase does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament, so various emendations of the text have been suggested. Thus Snaith, following the Septuagint and Vulgate, would delete one letter and read "...whose bars are everlasting bolts," and JB has "I went down to the countries underneath the earth, to the peoples of the past," but without an explanation for the changes involved.

As already noted, it is important to indicate clearly that the land whose gates lock shut forever is located,

figuratively speaking, at the very roots of the mountains. This appositional relationship may be expressed as "to the very roots of the mountains, that is, to the land whose gates lock shut forever." It may, however, be rather strange to speak of a land having gates, but one can often speak of "a place whose gates lock shut." The figurative relationship between land and gates may be made clear for some languages by introducing a kind of simile, for example, "the land which has, as it were, gates."

Instead of employing an active expression such as gates lock shut, it may be better to indicate a particular state, for example, "whose gates are locked shut." Such a figurative expression must be expressed in some languages by a type of simile, "whose gates are shut, as it were, by a key," or "whose gates cannot be opened."

The second part of verse 6 expresses a strong contrast to what precedes, since the sufferer acknowledges that he has been brought back from the depths alive, in spite of the strongly held article of faith that there was no return from Sheol. All hope, humanly speaking, was already lost, but the Lord had control even of the gates of Sheol (compare Psa 30.3, Job 38.17), just as in Revelation 1.18 the Risen Christ has the keys of Death and the underworld.

The word depths is translated by NEB and others as "the pit." This is one of several expressions used in the Old Testament for the underworld (so Basic English). In KJV it is rendered "corruption" (compare Psa 16.10, quoted in Acts 2.27, where Greek uses the same word as the Septuagint). The Hebrew word shahath is related, not to the verb shahath "to destroy," but to the verb shuah "to smite down." The word occurs a number of times in Psalms and Job in contexts relating to death, often as a parallel to Sheol. RSV is somewhat over-literal in speaking of "the life" of the poet as being brought up from "the Pit," and NEB and TEV make the meaning clearer with the word "alive."

The depths may be expressed as "that deep place," a phrase which may refer simultaneously to the ocean depths as well as to Sheol.

In a number of languages it may be necessary to render alive as a separate verb expression since it cannot be readily tacked on to brought me back. Therefore, one may need to translate the last clause of verse 6 as "brought me back from that deep place and caused me to live" or "...to live again" or "...caused my life to enter me again."

The poet addresses the Lord as "my God," the God with whom he has personal dealings as his worshiper (compare Psa 22.1).

For a discussion of the phrase O LORD my God, see 2.1.

2.7 When I felt my life slipping away,
then, O LORD, I prayed to you,
and in your holy Temple you heard me.

Now, for the third time, the psalmist mentions his desperate situation, as he had already done in verse 2 and in verses 3-6a. So once again the reference is to the situation before Jonah had been brought back alive from the underworld. The word life is not the same as that which is used in the previous verse, but is the word translated "neck" by NEB in verse 5, and by KJV RSV etc. as "soul" in this verse. The Hebrew word nephesh has a variety of meanings, as already noted, and here NEB has "my senses failed me."

The translation of nephesh depends to some extent on the way in which the accompanying verb is understood. TEV understands the verb as having the meaning "to faint," hence when I felt my life slipping away. In much the same way Smith-Goodspeed has "when I was losing consciousness," and Jewish Publication Society "when my life was ebbing away." A sense of "despair" is another possible meaning of the verb, as can be seen from the passages in the Psalms where it occurs (107.5, where the same expression is used as here in Jonah, 142.3, 143.4).

The figurative expression my life slipping away can only be expressed in some languages as "I was dying." The entire first clause may then be rendered as "when I felt that I was dying."

At the time of his greatest despair, the psalmist prayed to the Lord. NEB uses here the verb "remembered," but in contexts of prayer this means more than simply calling to mind. It involves mentioning the Lord by name, as in Jeremiah 20.9 and in Psalm 77.3, where the psalmist is no doubt praying to God as well as thinking about him.

In rendering O LORD and you it may be important to place them together, in which case, O LORD may be a type of attributive or modifier of you, for example, "then I prayed to you, who are my Lord."

The poet goes on to speak of his prayer achieving its objective by reaching the Lord in his holy Temple. This expression is the same as that which was used in verse 4, though that in itself is no proof that the earthly Temple in Jerusalem is meant here. In Micah 1.2, for instance, the reference may well be to God's heavenly temple, and that meaning seems most appropriate in this present context, where the speaker is not necessarily thinking in terms of the land of Israel. It is evident from such passages as Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8 that the ideas of the earthly Temple and of its heavenly counterpart were closely related in Israelite thought.

In your holy Temple may be expressed as "in the holy place where you dwell." When, however, it is combined with

the verb heard, it may be important to indicate the place as a source, for example, "you heard me from your holy Temple" or "...from your holy house."

2.8

Those who worship worthless idols
have abandoned their loyalty to you.

Many persons have suggested that the final verses of the poem may have originally been independent of the main prayer and are simply a reflection on the psalmist's situation after the crisis is over. The verb translated worship occurs in this form only in this verse and may have the sense of "retain a loyalty to." The expression translated "worthless idols" is a figurative means of describing those objects as being nothing more than a fleeting breath. The same figure, but with the verb in a slightly different form, is used in Psalm 31.6, and idols are frequently described as "emptiness." Mowinckel has "deceitful illusions."

If, as is suggested, worship is translated as "retain a loyalty to" or "remain loyal to," the contrast between the first line and the second line of verse 8 becomes highly significant. On the other hand, if worship is rendered in the more usual fashion, it can be expressed as "pray to" (an implied contrast to what Jonah was doing in praying to the Lord) or as "bow down before" or "give their allegiance to."

Worthless idols may be described as "idols that have no worth" or "...no value," but a more meaningful equivalent may be "idols that can do nothing" or "idols that have no power" or even "idols that are really nothing."

One of the most controversial words in this psalm, from the point of view of the translator, is the word hesed, which is translated loyalty by both TEV and RSV. The former makes it clear that the loyalty in question is towards the Lord. But the variety of interpretations that are found in modern translations is clear evidence that it is not only the meaning of the word which is in doubt, but also whether it refers here to a divine or a human quality.

The KJV has "forsake their own mercy." But does this mean the mercy they show to others or the mercy due to them from God? NAB evidently understands the word in the latter sense and translates "forsake their source of mercy." LB goes further in the direction of clarification with "have turned their backs on all the mercies waiting for them from the Lord." In much the same vein, Berkeley has "give up the grace that might be theirs" with a footnote, and JB has "forfeit the grace that was theirs." Also implying that God is the source of this quality is the Jewish Publication Society translation: "forsake their own welfare," and Basic English: "have given up their only hope."

Although there is no clear evidence, it seems likely

that Moffatt emended the Hebrew with his translation: "leave their real refuge." But Snaith claims that such emendation is unnecessary and that the same meaning can be obtained from a true understanding of the Hebrew word, so that "the meaning is that they forsake their real and true ground of confidence, that sure love of God who alone is constant and steadfast and sure." This same interpretation of hesed as reliability or steadfastness underlies its use in Isaiah 40.6.

In contrast with this view of hesed as referring here to a quality displayed by God towards his worshipers is the interpretation of the TEV, have abandoned their loyalty to you, where in RSV: "forsake their true loyalty," the quality in question is displayed by man towards God. Somewhat earlier Smith-Goodspeed had "forsake their piety," while the recent New American Standard Bible has "forsake their faithfulness." Mowinckel stressed the link between hesed and the covenant with the translation "abandoned their covenant obligations," which still emphasizes man as the source of this quality, but a quality displayed towards other members of the covenant community rather than to God. A treatment of this problem which has probably influenced NEB in the same direction as we find in TEV is that of A. R. Johnson: "They that pay regard to nonentities may abandon their devotion."

A somewhat different treatment of the same Hebrew text understands the verb as expressing a wish: "if only those that worship idols might renounce their false worship!" This provides a good contrast to the following verse with its assurance of the psalmist's continued loyalty to the one true God. This verse cannot with justice be regarded as the pious Jonah's reflections on the contrast between himself as a true Israelite and the heathen sailors who had traveled with him, since it was they rather than Jonah who had displayed a deeper piety in a time of crisis.

If one understands the Hebrew word hesed as referring to an attitude or quality of God, one may translate the second line of verse 8 as "they have abandoned you, who alone can help them" or "they have forsaken you, who alone can show them mercy." On the other hand, if one understands hesed as referring to an attitude or characteristic of people, one may translate, as in the case of the TEV, "are no longer loyal to you." This may be equivalent in some languages to an expression such as "they are no longer your adherents" or "...your followers" or even "...your people."

2.9

But I will sing praises to you;
 I will offer you a sacrifice
 and do what I have promised.
 Salvation comes from the LORD!"

This verse picks up the thought at the end of the

previous chapter, where the heathen sailors offer sacrifices and make vows. Here Jonah is represented as promising to offer such sacrifices, accompanied by words of praise, and as fulfilling the vows which he had previously made.

I will sing praises to you must be restructured in some languages by a redistribution of the various meaningful elements, for example, "I will sing songs which will praise you" or "...contain praises of you" or "I will praise you by my singing."

Though in English the expression offer you a sacrifice presents no difficulty of understanding, in some languages a literal rendering might be misleading since a term meaning "offer" might suggest not actually giving something but merely offering it with the implication of possible refusal or even withdrawal. Therefore, it may be necessary to render I will offer you a sacrifice as "I will make a sacrifice for you" or "I will give you a gift of a sacrifice" or "I will worship you by killing an animal for you."

The final sentence sums up the thoughts of a sufferer who has been rescued by the Lord, either from some natural calamity, such as a storm, or from an illness. He confesses that this salvation or "deliverance" (RSV) comes from the Lord. Here NEB uses "victory," which is appropriate in many instances, particularly in the Psalms and in the latter part of Isaiah. In this context, however, salvation seems more appropriate.

In a number of languages one cannot speak of "salvation coming." Only animate objects or vehicles may be regarded as "coming." Therefore, it may be necessary to restructure the final sentence of the poem to read "only the Lord can save" or "...can rescue."

2.10 Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah up on the beach, and it did.

In the final verse of the chapter, the narrative is resumed from verse 17 of the previous chapter. The Lord gives an order to the fish: "and now, at the Lord's bidding" (Knox), and the fish obeys. The idea of God speaking to an animal or a fish may seem strange, but the snake in the Garden of Eden is addressed by God in Genesis 3.14,15. Obediently, the fish proceeds to spew Jonah on to the dry land. The verb used here is more accurately translated as "vomited" (RSV) or "spewed" (NEB) or even "disgorged" (Berkeley), than as spit, the verb used for the action described in Numbers 12.14, Deuteronomy 25.9 etc. On the other hand, the verb used here is found in Proverbs 23.8, 25.16, and the corresponding noun in Proverbs 26.11. The use of spit in the TEV is prompted primarily by the more or less neutral connotations. The term "vomited" has unfortunate connotations and for many "spewed" is old-fashioned. One

of the principal difficulties with a term such as "spit" is that it might suggest that Jonah was only in the mouth of the big fish rather than in the stomach as suggested by 2.1. In many languages a term meaning "vomit" does not have the same unpleasant connotations which seem associated with the English term.

The shift between the poetry which ends in verse 9 and the beginning of verse 10 may often be marked by an additional line space, and in some instances by a more extensive transitional expression, for example, "after that" or "some-time later," but the temporal transition should not suggest any long period of time.

As in so many instances of expressions involving commands or speaking, it may be necessary to place the content of the utterance in the form of direct discourse, for example, "the Lord ordered the fish, Vomit Jonah up on the beach."

C H A P T E R 3

Today's English Version

Revised Standard Version

Jonah Obeyes the LORD

1 Once again the LORD spoke to Jonah. 2 He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to the people the message I have given you." 3 So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to walk through it. 4 Jonah started through the city, and after walking a whole day, he proclaimed, "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!"

1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

The subject heading Jonah Obeyes the LORD must be modified in some languages as "Jonah does what the Lord says," for in this particular context "obeys" does not imply continuous behavior but obedience to a specific command.

3.1 Once again the LORD spoke to Jonah.

Once again is literally as in RSV, "a second time." Except for this temporal phrase, 3.1 is the same as 1.1. He said, is also part of this verse, and as at the beginning of the book it is simply a means of introducing direct speech.

The combination Once again may be difficult to express. In many languages the closest equivalent is simply "again," for example, "again the Lord spoke to Jonah," but in other cases the closest equivalent may be "and now twice the Lord spoke to Jonah." As already noted in the case of 1.1, it may be important to combine the first verse with the first part of the second verse, for example, "again the Lord said to Jonah, Go to Nineveh..."

3.2 He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to the people the message I have given you."

The first part of verse 2 is identical with the first part of 1.2. The second part is interpreted by TEV as recommissioning Jonah in essentially the same way as at the

beginning of the book, namely, by proclaiming the message I have given you. But the Hebrew participle may be taken as referring (1) to the past, as in the Septuagint, or (2) to the present, as in Vulgate, or (3) to the future, as in the Syriac. In fact, very few modern translations apart from TEV, only Basic English, JB (contrast Bible de Jerusalem) and LB suggest a repetition of the message already given. If this were the meaning, another form of the verb would be more probable, and since a specific message (for example, in the form met with in such prophetic outbursts as the book of Nahum) is not found at the beginning of chapter one, it is perhaps better to follow the kind of wording found in RSV or NEB and to assume an indefinite tense, or one which might be rendered as "which I am giving you."

Unlike most translations, TEV avoids a literal rendering of the Hebrew (for example, RSV, "proclaim to it...") and specifies the people of Nineveh as the recipients of God's message. NEB is evidently aware of the problem but does not clarify the meaning. Two earlier translations both avoid the use of "it," namely, Moffatt: "and proclaim there what I will tell you" (so the Septuagint), and Chinese Union Version: "proclaim to its inhabitants the message I give you."

For the rather unusual apposition Nineveh, that great city, note the discussion under 1.2.

The verb rendered proclaim suggests a formal type of announcement, the type of proclamation, for example, which might be given by an official messenger. This suggests that the message itself is important, and it may actually be necessary in some languages to redistribute some of the meaning of proclaim by indicating the nature of the message, for example, "speak to the people the important message I have given you."

In a number of languages one does not speak of "a message being given," and therefore it may be necessary to say "the message which I have spoken to you." On the other hand, a more satisfactory equivalent may be simply "my words," that is to say, the last part of verse 2 may be rendered as "announce to the people my words" or "...what I have said."

3.3 So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to walk through it.

The third verse of chapter 1 began by saying "Jonah arose," and the remarks made there apply here also. This verse begins in the same way, but continues by saying that he set out, not in the opposite direction (as in 1.3) but in the direction of Nineveh, in accordance with the Lord's

instructions. The journey there is not described, and Jonah obeys without reply or question.

It may seem illogical in some languages to employ the order obeyed...and went, since the going to Nineveh would seem to be the way in which Jonah obeyed. Therefore, it may be necessary to restructure this sentence to read "Jonah obeyed the Lord by going to Nineveh" or, as in some instances, "Jonah went to Nineveh and in this way obeyed the Lord."

The second half of the verse, which describes how large Nineveh was, is inserted in verse 4 in NEB. TEV treats this description as appositional to the mention of Nineveh. The construction used in Hebrew inserts the description as a parenthetical explanation: "now Nineveh was an immensely great city, three days' journey across." The form of this explanatory note and its insertion here give every appearance of referring to a city which was once of importance, but at the time of writing was no more than a ruin. The timelessness of the expression a city so large corresponds to the form of the Hebrew verb used here which does not indicate whether Nineveh was previously larger and was now reduced in size or whether at the time of writing it was regarded as a large city. The construction is the same as in Genesis 3.1 "the serpent was more crafty" (NEB), which does not tell us anything about the period during which the serpent was crafty.

NEB calls Nineveh "a vast city," in this way translating an expression which is a form of the superlative, literally "great to God," so perhaps, "of superhuman size" (compare JB "great beyond compare," Moffatt "great, great city"). There is no justification for the LB rendering "a very large city, with extensive suburbs."

The superlative used here (KJV "an exceeding great city") is similar to what is found in Genesis 23.6, 30.8, Exodus 9.28, 1 Samuel 14.15, Psalms 36.7, 80.11. In all of these passages KJV uses an expression denoting the superlative, following in most cases medieval Jewish commentators. The Oxford Hebrew Lexicon compares the usage here in Jonah to Acts 7.20, "a very beautiful child."

The last part of the verse, that it took three days to walk through it, has presented difficulty for some translators, in view of the contradiction between this statement and the size of Nineveh as revealed by archaeology. The circumference of the ruins is about eight miles, and even if this were the length from one end to the other, it would not require as much as one day to cross the city on foot. Even if the suburbs are included (compare LB), the city would not extend for anything like a three days' journey. Khorsabad, which may correspond to Rehoboth Ir of Genesis 10.11 and has the best claim to be considered a "suburb" of Nineveh, is only a dozen miles away.

KJV's "of three days' journey" is too indefinite to be

clear to the reader, and RSV improves this with "three days' journey in breadth." Whereas most modern translations, though using different phraseology, agree with TEV in the meaning of this phrase, there are some exceptions. The New American Standard Bible uses the indefinite expression "a three days' walk," in accordance with the pattern set by KJV. Berkeley is no more definite in its text: "requiring three days' travel," but the footnote ("that is, to go through the complex of turns that made up the city and its extensive suburbs") reads like an attempt to evade the clear meaning of the text. LB also avoids the clear meaning of the writer by saying "so large that it would take three days to walk around it." As already noted, the city is described in LB as having "extensive suburbs," so these are doubtless thought of as included within the city's circumference. But the Hebrew text speaks of walking across the breadth of the city, and not around it, as is clear from verse 4.

A city so large that it took three days to walk through presents certain difficulties in translation since there is no indication as to precisely who was walking through it. This statement can be best rendered as a type of general indication of size by saying "a city so large that a person would have to walk three days in order to walk across it" or "...through it." Sometimes such an expression could be rendered as a condition, for example, "a person could go through the city if he walked for three days."

In some languages there may be difficulties because of no clear distinction between "hamlet," "village," "town," and "city." In some instances only a rather generic term is used for any center of population, and the varying degrees of size are indicated as a "small village," "a large village," and "a very large village."

3.4 Jonah started through the city, and after walking a whole day, he proclaimed, "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!"

This verse begins by describing what happened when Jonah reached the large city of Nineveh. Jonah started through the city, that is, began to walk through it, but did not start to proclaim his message until he had walked one day's journey, presumably not half-way to the other side. Only then did he proclaim his message: "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed." NEB, no doubt intentionally, uses the verb "overthrown," to correspond to the verb used in Hebrew, which is the same as that associated with the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19.21-29. It is also used in Jeremiah 20.16, Lamentations 4.6, and generally God is the subject when the reference is to the destruction of a city, usually in some violent manner (compare Amos 4.11, and the imagery of God "overturning"

Jerusalem in 2 Kings 21.13). Winding Quest translates suitably, "this city will become a heap of ruins." Nowhere else in the book is there a proclamation or announcement by Jonah, and we hear nothing more of him in this chapter.

Jonah's only message to the people of Nineveh consisted of the unconditional assertion that only forty days remained before the total destruction of their city or "within forty days Nineveh will have been overthrown." The expression forty days is often used in the Bible as a round number, for example, Exodus 24.18, 34.28, Numbers 13.25, 1 Samuel 17.16, 1 Kings 19.8, where most scholars believe that an exact period is not intended. It is clear from the mention here of Jonah's single day's journey, using the same kind of expression as in the previous verse, that the reference in verse 3 must be to the diameter of the city and not to its circumference.

It is frequently necessary to indicate clearly who are the persons who received the proclamation announced in verse 4. Therefore, it may be necessary to say "he proclaimed to the people" or "he announced to the inhabitants of the city" or "...those who lived there."

No reason is given to the people for the threat of destruction and no alternative of repentance is offered. It is as though Jonah is only concerned to carry out his commission to the absolute minimum, and he seemingly has no concern for the well-being of those to whom he preached.

In a number of languages the method of destruction must always be indicated by a verb such as destroyed, for example, "conquered by an enemy," "destroyed by fire," or "leveled by an earthquake." The most generic expression may simply be "will not exist any longer." In this context such a general statement may be preferable, for it would be reading a good deal into the text to suggest the specific way in which Nineveh would be destroyed.

Today's English Version

5 The people of Nineveh believed God's message. So they decided that everyone should fast, and all the people, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth to show that they had repented.

6 When the king of Nineveh heard about it, he got up from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat down in ashes. 7 He sent out a proclamation to the people of Nineveh: "This is an order from the king and his officials: No one is to eat anything; all persons,

Revised Standard Version

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

6 Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any-

cattle, and sheep are forbidden to eat or drink. 8 All persons and animals must wear sackcloth. Everyone must pray earnestly to God and must give up his wicked behavior and his evil actions. 9 Perhaps God will change his mind; perhaps he will stop being angry, and we will not die!"

thing; let them not feed, or drink water, 8 but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. 9 Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?"

The second section in chapter 3 combines verses 5 through 9, and the section might be given a separate section heading, for example, "How the people of Nineveh respond to God's message" or "What the people of Nineveh do."

The relations between the various events in this section are quite clear except perhaps for the first part of verse 7, which could be introduced by some temporal particle such as "then." Verse 9 might even be introduced by a type of condition, for example, "it is possible that if we do that, God will change his mind."

3.5 The people of Nineveh believed God's message. So they decided that everyone should fast, and all the people, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth to show that they had repented.

Following the logical order of events, some, for example, Moffatt, would transpose 4.5 to stand here, since that verse describes how Jonah waited to see the outcome of his message.

But the order of the Hebrew is reasonable enough as it stands, since it immediately goes on to describe the reaction of the people of Nineveh to what they heard, namely, that they believed God's message. There is nothing in the Hebrew to correspond to message (NEB "word"), but the word "believe" normally carries with it the implication that God has said something which is either believed as true or rejected as untrue. So also in Genesis 15.6 Abraham believes God's promise, while in 2 Kings 17.14 the Israelites refuse to believe God.

The expression believed God's message must sometimes be restructured as "believed what God had said through Jonah." However, if in verse 2 one has used "my message," it would be possible to employ in verse 5 "God's message." In some cases a verb such as "believe" refers primarily to people rather than to messages, and therefore it may be better to translate "believed God" in the sense of "believed what God had said."

The Hebrew verb translated believe is generally followed by the preposition be, rather less frequently by the preposition le, and sometimes by a noun clause, as in Lamen-

tations 4.12. Here it occurs with the preposition be, which has a great variety of meanings, mostly related to the English prepositions "in" or "by." Gk section 119.1 translates this phrase as "to trust in (to cleave trustingly to) somebody or something." There are two instances of this verb followed by le in the Old Testament (Deut 9.23, Isa 43.10) in which God is the object, as against nine followed by be (Gen 15.6, Exo 14.31, Num 14.11, 20.12, Deut 1.32, 2 Kings 17.14, 2 Chr 20.20, Psa 78.22, and Jonah 3.5). The verb does not occur with God as direct object.

Whereas there is a difference in meaning between "believe God" and "believe in God," there appears to be no corresponding difference in usage between the two Hebrew prepositions used with this verb. The verb "believe" means acceptance as true of what is stated by someone or something, such as a document. But to "believe in" or "put one's trust in" indicates a deeper measure of reliance on, or faith in, the object of one's trust. As an indication of the identity in meaning of the verb with these two prepositions, Deuteronomy 1.32 may be compared with Deuteronomy 9.23. In both passages the verb is translated "trust" in NEB and TEV, and the meaning indicated by the context is the same in both passages, though the preposition is not the same. Again, in Psalm 106.12,24, the preposition varies, but the meaning is "believe" in both verses. On the other hand, in 2 Chronicles 20.20, where the same preposition be occurs twice after this verb, TEV understands a difference in meaning between the first occurrence and the second, "put your trust in the Lord your God...Believe what his prophets tell you."

The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that where the usage varies so much from one passage to another, the translator must be guided by the context.

Here in Jonah there is a real difference between believed God's message or "believed God's word" (NEB) on the one hand, and "believe in God" (JB and New American Standard Bible) or "showed faith in God" (Knox) on the other. There is nothing in the form of the Hebrew, or parallels elsewhere in the Old Testament, to indicate which is correct. That the writer would say of the people of Nineveh that they believed in God, might seem an over-statement, but such a meaning is at least a possible one in practically all passages where God is the object of this verb phrase. To quote J. D. Smart:² "The Ninevites did not merely believe Jonah's prediction to be true and repent in fear; they responded in faith to Israel's God." Compare A. Jepsen:³ "When Jonah proclaimed to them 'Yet three (so the Septuagint) days, and Nineveh will be destroyed,' the people of Nineveh did what Israel, and even Moses or Aaron were incapable of doing. They put their trust in God, and did so without the occurrence of signs and wonders such as preceded the statements in Exodus 4.31, 14.31, but solely on the word of Jonah. The translation 'they believed in God' weakens the effect. It could be paraphrased as 'they took

the message seriously, as a message that really came from God,' even though Jonah's proclamation made no mention of God."

The name of Yahweh is not used at this point, however, and is avoided in the rest of this chapter, which uses the more general term "God." There is no justification for the translation in LB "they believed him," referring to Jonah.

The last part of the verse in TEV, to show that they had repented, does not correspond formally to any words in the Hebrew. These words simply make explicit for the modern reader what would be implicitly understood by the first readers of the books. A good translation often requires additions such as this, and in making such an addition a translation is not to be judged as lacking in faithfulness to the original, since it is more faithful to the sense than a translation which leaves the reader wondering why the people of Nineveh wore sackcloth. There is, of course, no need to repeat the explanation in verse 6.

The phrase to show that they had repented, which identifies the purpose of both fasting and the wearing of sackcloth, should in some way be related to both of these events. It may be necessary, therefore, to introduce the final phrase by "they did all this to show that they had repented."

An expression for fast may be simply "they went without food purposely." It is very important to avoid a translation of fast which would suggest only the lack of food or a famine.

Since the decision made by the people of Nineveh was something which was no doubt communicated, it may be necessary in some languages to put this into the form of direct discourse, for example, "so they decided, We must all fast..."

A common equivalent for the expression from the greatest to the least is "including both the rich and the poor" or "including those who command and those who obey" or as in some instances "including those in the center of town as well as those who live in the outskirts" or "from the shopkeepers to the beggars."

Repented may be rendered in a number of languages as "turned away from their sins" or "were extremely sorry for their sins" or "resolved to sin no more."

The word for "sackcloth" is one of the few which has come over to us in English in much the same form as in Hebrew, retaining its sound in Greek and Latin on the way. It was a coarse material, worn next to the skin, as is seen from 2 Kings 6.30, where a king wears sackcloth as a sign of distress at his people's suffering.

3.6 When the king of Nineveh heard about it, he got up from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat down in ashes.

TEV does not make it clear what the king of Nineveh heard about: (1) the message proclaimed by Jonah, (2) the repentance of the people, or (3) the decision that everyone should fast. The Hebrew is equally indefinite, since it merely says that the "word" (dabhar) reached the king. Smith-Goodspeed is excessively literal here, with "when the thing reached the king of Nineveh," leaving it to the imagination to wonder what this "thing" could possibly be. NEB's "when the news reached the king" fails to define the nature of the news, but it is most natural to suppose that the writer describes first in verse 5 the reaction of the subjects, and then goes on in the next verse to speak of the king's response to Jonah's message. Knox takes this verse as a development of the preceding one, with "nay, the king of Nineveh himself." LB is not justified in including the king among those mentioned in the previous verse, with its "from the king down, everyone..." So here in verse 6 LB presumes that the king has heard Jonah's message already, and the verse is taken to be an explanation of the action of the people.

In view of the obscure reference of the pronoun it, one may be justified in employing a clause referring to various aspects of what had happened, for example, "when the king of Nineveh heard about all that was happening." In this way both the preaching of Jonah and the response of the people would be involved. It is quite likely that whatever was said to the king would include both elements.

In a narrative of this kind, it is not necessary to look for the name of a specific king. The very title "king of Nineveh" rather than "king of Assyria" is enough to show that the writer is not concerned with historical details. The description of his activity takes on a chiastic form: he abandons his throne (a), takes off his robes (b), puts on sackcloth (b), and sits, like Job, in ashes (a), as a sign of repentance. Seated on his throne and wearing his robes of state, he is the stock figure of a king, which makes his repentance all the more impressive.

Throne may be rendered as "his great chair" or "his important seat." On the other hand, a description of the seat as a place of judging or of decision making may also be involved, for example, "the chair from which he gave orders" or "the seat where he judged."

A literal translation of took off his robe might suggest completely undressing in public. A more satisfactory rendering may be "took off his robe of authority" or even as in some languages "took off his king's coat."

Put on sackcloth is best rendered in many instances as "put on clothing made of sackcloth" or "...coarse cloth."

In choosing a term for ashes it is extremely important to distinguish between (1) hot coals and (2) ashes which are cold and have simply been scattered or placed in piles. Therefore, sat down in ashes may best be rendered in many

instances as "sat down where there were cold ashes." One would certainly want to avoid any translation which would suggest a "hot seat."

3.7

He sent out a proclamation to the people of Nineveh: "This is an order from the king and his officials: No one is to eat anything; all persons, cattle, and sheep are forbidden to eat or drink.

This verse repeats the substance of verse 5, but this time the decision that everyone should fast originates from the king. Here, he sent out a proclamation represents the causative form of the verb "to proclaim," with an impersonal unspecified agent, followed by the verb "and he said." In view of the causative element in sending out the proclamation to the people, it may be best to render the first part of this verse as "caused the people of Nineveh to hear a proclamation" or "he ordered men to proclaim to the people of Nineveh."

Then the content of the proclamation is introduced by the phrase "by order of the king and his officials." The inclusion at this point of the officials, or "great men," resembles Daniel 6.17, where the king's seal and that of his nobles are both affixed to the stone over the mouth of the pit of lions in which Daniel was imprisoned. But this is more characteristic of a later period in the Old Testament. For the king to refer to himself in this way in the third person may be unnatural in some languages.

The subject and predicate relationships in this is an order from the king and his officials must be inverted in a number of languages, for example, "The king and his officials announce this order to you" or "...make this command." Since, however, it is the king himself who caused the proclamation to be made, it may be necessary in a number of languages for the king to speak of himself in the first person, for example, "I the king and my officials command you..."

The ban on eating and drinking goes further in this proclamation than in the parallel passage in verse 5, since animals are included here, in two pairs: "Neither man nor beast, neither cattle nor sheep, shall taste anything." The verb that follows is one which applies only to animals feeding, hence NEB "to graze." The final prohibition in the verse, against drinking water, applies to both men and animals. Obviously the ban applies to any other liquid, too, with the force "they are not to drink anything." In some languages, such as English, it is perfectly natural to use verbs such as "eat" and "drink" with no expressed object, as in TEV, whereas in other languages the verb sounds incomplete without an object.

In view of the seeming duplication of commands no one is to eat anything and all persons...are forbidden to eat or drink, it may be important to introduce or drink as simply "or even to drink anything." In some languages, of course, eat or drink may be summarized simply as to "consume solid or liquid food."

The classification implied in all persons, cattle, and sheep may seem extremely strange in some languages, for it would appear to leave out goats, pigs and other domestic animals. It may therefore be better to reflect more closely the form of the Hebrew itself, for example, "no person nor domestic animal whether large or small shall eat anything." Obviously only domesticated animals could be involved in such a command, since they would be under the control of persons who would make provision for their food. It would seem quite ludicrous in some languages to use a form for "animals" which would imply wild animals, since such a proclamation would either have no effect upon them or would be interpreted to mean that the king in some miraculous way was able to command the behavior of wild animals.

3.8

All persons and animals must wear sackcloth.
Everyone must pray earnestly to God and must give up his wicked behavior and his evil actions.

All persons and animals must wear sackcloth, with its inclusion of the animals in the outward signs of penitence, sounds even stranger than the order for the animals to fast. The same thought is to be found in Judith 4.10. The strangeness is avoided in some translations by the use of some such expression as "they" (NEB) or "everyone" (LB), but this does not convey to the modern reader the same impression as was made by the original on the first readers. Of course, some say that the expression "both man and beast" has accidentally been copied in verse 8 from verse 7, but an honest translation will either tell the reader this, as in JB, or translate the present Hebrew text as in TEV, RSV, Smith-Good-speed, Jewish Publication Society, NAB, etc. Taken literally, the Hebrew text will also extend to the rest of the verse the association of animals with humans in the other signs of repentance. But it is legitimate to suppose that the writer had, by the second half of the verse, abandoned the thought of the animals.

It may seem contradictory to speak of persons and animals both "wearing sackcloth," since animals would not normally be spoken of as "wearing clothes." Therefore, it may be necessary to say "all persons must wear sackcloth and sackcloth must be put on all animals" or "...tied on all animals."

TEV has the main break in the verse after the

first clause, and then by saying everyone must pray earnestly implies that human beings alone are indicated from this point onwards. NEB has the main break after the next clause, and then makes it clear that human beings alone are the subject in the last of the verse by saying "let every man abandon his wicked ways." Here, as often, the word adam "man," in the first part of the verse, refers to persons of either sex, as suggested in RSV. The use of the Hebrew word ish in the second sentence, Everyone, does not even exclude a reference to animals, since it has here a distributive force (compare Gen 15.10, Isa 53.6).

In some languages pray earnestly may be expressed metaphorically as "pray with one's heart exposed" or "pray with true words." In some instances the meaning may be expressed as "pray and mean what one says."

The king is represented as being aware of the kind of behavior which required repentance if Jonah's words were not to come true and the city be destroyed: wickedness in general and violence in particular. The NEB is more specific than TEV in this respect, with its reference to "habitual violence" rather than simply his evil actions. This last expression represents the more literal "the violence which is in his hands" of RSV. The reference to "hands" here is a clear indication that by this time the writer is no longer thinking in terms of animals, but is concerned with human beings.

In some languages it is quite impossible to speak of "giving up wicked behavior." One may, however, "stop doing what is bad" or "stop being wicked." The final expression, his evil actions, may be expressed as "being violent" or "using violence against people" or "doing harm to people."

3.9 Perhaps God will change his mind; perhaps he will stop being angry, and we will not die!"

In verse 9 the king links the threat that Jonah had uttered in verse 4 with the behavior of the people of Nineveh that had caused that threat to be made. In other words, he suggests that the destruction of Nineveh can be averted by the people's repentance, although in verse 4 the destruction was not linked with any conditions. In this respect, the person whose words come closest to those of the classical prophets is not Jonah, but the king, as can be seen by comparing this verse with Jeremiah 25.5, 35.15, Zechariah 1.4, and particularly Jeremiah 26.3, where God's willingness to relent is linked, as in these two verses, with reformed behavior on the part of Israel. The opening words of this verse look, in fact, like a quotation from Joel 2.14. The expression perhaps God will change his mind represents the Hebrew idiom "who knows?" followed by two verbs both used of human repentance. The same idiom, again with the force

of "perhaps" occurs in 2 Samuel 12.22 and Esther 4.14.

The first of the two verbs which follow ("turn and relent" Smith-Goodspeed) is redundant (compare Jer 4.28) as can be seen from a comparison with verse 10, where only the second occurs and is translated changed his mind. The first verb occurs often in the prophets, especially in Jeremiah, in the sense of "repent," but it can often bear the adverbial meaning "again, once more," as in Judges 19.7. Against that meaning here is the fact that there is no repetition involved in God's relenting and sparing the people of Nineveh. The use of the verb "repent" by KJV RSV NEB NAB etc., with God as subject, may well raise problems in the mind of the reader, who will naturally think of that word as being confined to human activity. This Hebrew verb occurs with God as subject in Genesis 6.6,7, and in fact more frequently than with a human subject, approximately 32 occurrences out of a total of about 40. From this it is clear that "repent" needs to be replaced by such a verb as "relent" (so Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, Knox, JB, NAB, Berkeley, New American Standard Bible, Jewish Publication Society) or "change one's mind." An interesting passage for the study of this verb is 1 Samuel 15, particularly verses 11, 29, and 35, where the verb is translated each time in RSV as "repent," though it is stated there that "repentance" is a human rather than a divine activity (compare Num 23.19).

The concept of possibility expressed in the adverb perhaps must be expressed in some languages as a clause, for example, "it may happen" or "it is possible that."

A literal translation of changed his mind is misleading in a number of languages, for it would suggest "exchanging his mind," that is to say, substituting one mind for another. An equivalent may be "will think differently" or "will decide differently" or even "will not do what he has said he will do."

The consequence of God's "changing his mind" is seen by the king to be that he will stop being angry, or more literally, as in RSV, "turn from his fierce anger." This expression is used also in Exodus 32.12 (one of the passages referring to God's "relenting" or "changing his mind"), Numbers 25.4, and many other passages in the Old Testament. In fact, "fierce anger" is a bound phrase in biblical Hebrew, in which apart from one or two textually dubious passages, the first of the two elements never occurs except with a word for God's anger, and about 30% of the occurrences include the verb "turn away from," as here.

The possibility expressed by perhaps may need to be repeated, for example, "it may be that he will stop being angry." Stop being angry may be expressed as "no longer be angry."

In a number of languages there are a variety of words to express "anger." Some of these may suggest unjustified wrath or anger, and others may indicate by their connota-

tions that a measure of anger or hostility has a reason or justification. It is this latter type of term which is needed in this context.

The statement concerning the people not dying must be made more explicit in some languages, for example, "and therefore we will not die" or "and as a result of that we will not die." Since, however, there is an implied causative relationship between God's ceasing his anger and the people's possible death, it must be expressed in some languages as "and so we will not be caused to die" or "and so he will not cause us to die."

Today's English Version

10 God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their wicked behavior. So he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had said he would.

Revised Standard Version

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.

Verse 10 involves the response of God to what the people of Nineveh had done. It could be introduced by a separate section heading, but it would seem to be too short to constitute a separate section. The theme is "God changes his mind" or "God decides not to punish the people of Nineveh."

Since the first part of verse 10 introduces the temporal basis for the second part, it may be useful to make the first sentence a kind of temporal condition, for example, "when God saw what they were doing and saw that they had given up their wicked ways, he changed his mind..."

3.10 God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their wicked behavior. So he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had said he would.

As so often in Old Testament narratives, there is no specific mention of the order being carried out. But God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their evil ways. God's threat in verse 4 is thus seen to be a conditional one, depending on human response and behavior, as Genesis 18.7,8 makes clear. Presumably the result of Nineveh's repentance could only be known for certain when the forty days of verse 4 had expired.

What they did must refer to the fasting, the wearing of sackcloth, and the earnest prayers of the people of Nineveh. It may be important to make this rather explicit by saying "God saw what the people of Nineveh were doing" or even "...how they had changed."

Had given up their wicked behavior may be expressed as "were no longer doing sinful things" or "were no longer doing what was bad." The verb translated here given up is the same as is used of God changing his mind in verse 9.

Did not punish them must be expressed in some languages as "did not cause them to suffer" or, in a somewhat idiomatic form, "did not pay them back for their badness" (literally, "did not do it").

The clause as he had said he would must be expanded somewhat in some languages because of the embedded direct discourse, for example, "as he had said, I will punish them" or even "as he had said through Jonah, The city will be destroyed."

Today's English Version

Revised Standard Version

Jonah's Anger and God's Mercy

1 Jonah was very unhappy about this and became angry. 2 So he prayed, "LORD, didn't I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That's why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to change your mind and not punish. 3 Now then, LORD, let me die. I am better off dead than alive."

4 The LORD answered, "What right do you have to be angry?"

1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, "I pray thee, LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

The section heading Jonah's Anger and God's Mercy must be considerably altered in some languages in order to express anger and mercy as verbs and to point out more clearly the contrast, for example, "Jonah is angry but God shows mercy."

Jonah's reaction and his prayer to the Lord, followed by the Lord's answer, constitute the first part of chapter 4. The relationship between the end of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4 can sometimes be made somewhat clearer by translating the phrase about this as "because of this, Jonah was very unhappy..." or "because God changed his mind, Jonah was very unhappy..."

4.1 Jonah was very unhappy about this and became angry.

To say that Jonah was very unhappy about this is an understatement, in view of the context. The same idiom is found in Nehemiah 2.10 (they were highly indignant) and 13.8 (I was furious), so JB "Jonah was very indignant" is more satisfactory. NEB "Jonah was greatly displeased and angry" links together the two verbs which describe Jonah's reaction, and so uses one expression to intensify the other. TEV, on the other hand, suggests two successive stages in the development of Jonah's feelings. (Compare NAB, "This was greatly displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry.") In the use of the two verbs which occur in this verse, the writer echoes the wording of 3.9,10, with their reference to God's

anger and displeasure at Nineveh, which had been replaced by his mercy.

Was very unhappy must be expressed in a number of languages as suggesting a change of state; therefore, "became indignant" or "became very much irked." This may be expressed figuratively in some languages as "his stomach became bitter" or "his heart swelled up inside of him." Anger may also be expressed figuratively as "his face became red" or "his skin flashed hot."

4.2

So he prayed, "LORD, didn't I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That's why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to change your mind and not punish.

Now for the second time (compare 2.1) Jonah prays to the Lord, but here the tone of the prayer is very different. This time he explains the reason for his anger at God's merciful treatment of the people of Nineveh. The flashback employed here tells us for the first time the reason for Jonah's attempt in chapter 1 to travel in the opposite direction instead of to Nineveh. The beginning of his prayer takes the form of a question, and the question form is retained in TEV. But such rhetorical questions, which do not really expect an answer, can easily be replaced by statements, since that is essentially what they are. So, for example, NEB translates "This, O Lord, is what I feared when I was in my own country."

Since in so many languages a term for "prayer" suggests "petition," such a form would seem out of place in this context, for it is a complaint which Jonah is bringing to the Lord. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to say "so Jonah said to the Lord."

TEV is rather more literal than NEB in saying didn't I say (similarly JB "just as I said would happen"), where NEB has "this is what I feared." The Hebrew noun used here is the same as in 3.6 and covers a wide area of meaning. It need not refer to a spoken word, though that is its most usual meaning. Just as the Hebrew verb amar "to say" can often mean "to think," so here "word" can stand for "thought," and so by implication "fear."

TEV uses home in this verse in its wider sense of "homeland" rather than "house." Before I left home corresponds to the more literal translation of RSV, "when I was yet in my country."

As in other instances, the direct address "Lord" must be expressed in some languages as "my Lord."

The clause before I left home may be more appropriately placed at the beginning of the direct discourse or at least

immediately following the expression of direct address, for example, "before I left home, didn't I say that this is just what you would do?"

The indirect discourse must be made direct in a number of languages, for example, "didn't I say, I know that you will change your mind." Because of the particular nature of the embedded direct discourse, it is necessary to alter the wording so as to represent what Jonah would have said prior to the actual events; otherwise, the direct discourse would be out of keeping with what Jonah could or would have said.

That's why I did my best is an attempt to translate a difficult Hebrew verb which may be taken here in an adverbial sense, "at first" (so NAB "I fled at first"). The same Hebrew verb is translated "prevent" in KJV of Psalm 119.147,148, but the verb "prevent" no longer has the same meaning in English as it had when that translation was made. It is unlikely, therefore, that Berkeley is correct in translating this passage: "This is why I fled to Tarshish to prevent it."

NEB (also New American Standard Bible) uses a verb which attempts to recognize the temporal aspect of this Hebrew word by saying "to forestall it." This does formal justice to the verb in the original, but is not so suitable to the situation in which Jonah found himself. As normally used in English "forestall" carries with it both the idea of foreseeing someone else's action and of taking effective action to ensure that it does not take place. The element of anticipation is certainly present in Jonah's flight in the direction of Spain, but it is only indirectly that his flight would have meant the sparing of Nineveh, since he then would not have been able to denounce it.

If one understands that's why I did my best to run away to Spain as being better interpreted as an expression of haste (as RSV), it is possible to render this sentence as "that is why I ran away to Spain as fast as I could" or "that is why I left for Spain as quickly as possible." (It is impossible in some languages to translate literally "run away," since Jonah went by boat, not by running.) If, on the other hand, one wished to suggest the intensity with which Jonah undertook to escape to Spain, one may translate "that is why I did everything I could to go to Spain." It is rarely possible to translate literally "I did my best," since one must qualify "best" in terms of some particular kind of activity.

Chinese Union Version arranges the text of this verse in a more logical order than most translations by first stating the reason for Jonah's action, and then the action itself, "I knew that you were...therefore I made haste to flee..."

The second part of the verse indicates the degree of Jonah's bitterness against God's decision to spare Nineveh.

The influence of Joel has already been observed in connection with 3.9a, which is a close parallel to Joel 2.14. Those words in Joel are immediately preceded by a confession of faith in God's mercy in terms very similar to those used here. Parallel with the "who knows?" expressed by the king of Nineveh in 3.9 is the I knew of Jonah in this verse. Jonah did not need to question, as the king did, whether God was capable of changing his mind and withholding punishment. He knew that God was too kind-hearted to carry out the threat which the prophet had been commissioned to deliver (3.4), and that was the reason he had been reluctant to deliver his message in the first place. Jonah quotes here the confession of faith found in Exodus 34.6, but not as a ground for thankfulness, but as a ground for complaint that God could not be counted upon to be consistent in punishing those who deserved to suffer. Accordingly, to understand this passage correctly, it must be seen as a biting touch of irony, or even of scorn, against a God who was too mild to lend his support to the prophet by destroying Nineveh in accordance with the commissioned word of prophecy. NEB hints at the irony by enclosing the words from Exodus in quotation marks, "a god gracious and compassionate, longsuffering and ever constant."

There are a number of passages in the Old Testament which echo the wording of Exodus 34.6. The closest approximation is Psalm 86.15. The formula in Jonah is practically the same as in Joel 2.13, and varies from Exodus in reversing the order of the first two adjectives, and making no mention of "truth." This shorter form, with the same order of words as in Jonah, is also found in Nehemiah 9.17 and Psalm 145.8. The shorter form, but with the same order as in Exodus and in Psalm 86, is given in Psalm 103.8. So it is evident that the confession of Israel's faith stated here in Jonah was a familiar one during centuries of her history. Only here is it used as a ground for criticism of God's nature. The first two adjectives loving and merciful are used to describe God, not only in the passages already mentioned, but in 2 Chronicles 30.9, Nehemiah 9.31, Psalm 111.4. These two adjectives are applied in the Old Testament solely to God, with the possible exception of Psalm 112.4, where some scholars understand the last line to refer to God (for example, RSV), and others conclude that it refers to man.

You are a loving and merciful God may be rendered as "you are a God who loves people and is kind to them" or "you as God love people and show mercy to them."

The phrase always patient corresponds to a Hebrew expression generally rendered in earlier translations as "slow to anger." As well as in the passages just mentioned, it is used of God in Numbers 14.18 and Nehemiah 1.3. In Proverbs 14.29, 15.18, and 16.32 it is used to describe human beings who are not easily roused to anger, but are even-tempered and patient.

Patient may be expressed both negatively and positively, for example, "you do not become angry quickly" or "you do not punish right away" in contrast with "you very slowly become angry with people" or "you put up with people's badness for a long time."

The words always kind correspond to two Hebrew words which are consistently rendered in RSV as "abounding in steadfast love." The translation of hesed as "steadfast love" is closer to the meaning of the Hebrew than the rather colorless kind of TEV. In NEB the normal way of expressing this phrase is "ever constant," though in Psalm 86.5 another element in the Hebrew, that of love, is brought out by speaking of the Lord as "full of true love." As far as possible, a translation of the Hebrew word hesed should do justice to the emphasis on love and on its constancy and loyal steadfastness. It has been defined by H. W. Wolff to denote "kindhearted actions that, by spontaneous love and the faithful meeting of responsibilities, create or establish a sense of community."¹

In order to do better justice to the meaning of Hebrew hesed, one can translate in this context "people can always trust you to be good to them."

The final section of this verse, and always ready to change your mind and not punish, is an echo of 3.10. In NEB this is included within quotation marks along with the words quoted from Exodus 34.6. The expression is not a quotation from that part of Exodus, however, and the terminology "always willing to repent of the disaster" is far from intelligible. It borrows some of the wording of 3.10, but does it far less effectively than TEV. Much the same wording as in 3.10 is found in the Hebrew of Exodus 32.14, but there it refers to Israel, not Nineveh.

It may be important to specify somewhat more clearly the relationship between change your mind and not punish. Since the latter is the result of the former, one can then translate "change your mind so as not to punish" or "decide not to punish." The final part of verse 2 may therefore be expressed as "you are always ready to decide not to punish" or "...change your decision so as not to punish" or "...decide differently and therefore not punish."

4.3 Now, then, LORD, let me die. I am better off dead than alive."

The introductory adverbial expression now then can rarely be translated literally, since "now" would refer to the immediate time and "then" would refer to a subsequent time or perhaps a prior time. Though in English both of the adverbial expressions are temporal, they actually suggest a causal relationship, for example, "therefore" or "as a result of all this" or even "so."

I am better off dead than alive may be expressed as "to be dead is better for me than to be alive" or "if I were dead, it would be better for me than for me to be alive." Jonah feels that his victory has been achieved at the cost of the satisfaction he would have felt at seeing the destruction of Nineveh. So he asks the Lord, "take my life" (NEB), since it is better to be dead than alive. The word used for "life" is the same Hebrew word as in 2.7, and it occurs again later in this chapter.

4.4

The LORD answered, "What right do you have to be angry?"

There is a problem involved in the introductory expression The LORD answered since what follows is actually a question. Therefore, it may be necessary to translate "the Lord answered Jonah by asking a question" or "the Lord asked Jonah a question in reply."

What right do you have to be angry? may be expressed as "how can you justify being angry?" or "what excuse do you have for being angry?"

The Lord replies with a question like that addressed to Cain (Gen 4.6) "What right have you to be angry?" The Hebrew verb used here can mean "to do (something) well" (for example, 1 Sam 16.17), but it can also mean "to do right," as in Isaiah 1.17, Jeremiah 4.22. So here the sense seems to be "Are you doing right in being angry?" or, as in Moffatt, JB "Are you right to be angry?" Basic English is close to TEV with "Have you any right to be angry?" while the reasonableness, rather than the rightfulness, of Jonah's anger is questioned in Chinese Union Version "Is it reasonable for you to be as angry as this?" (compare Berkeley, New American Standard Bible "Do you have good reason to be angry?"). Knox acknowledges in a note the uncertainty of the meaning here: "The exact force of the Hebrew idiom used here is uncertain. Some think it means Hast thou good reason to be angry?; others would translate Art thou very angry?" while Knox himself suggests "Why, what anger is this?" Smith-Goodspeed prefers his alternative "Are you so very angry?" and Jewish Publication Society: "Are you that deeply grieved?" This is no doubt the basis of NEB "Are you so angry?", the meaning of which is not clear at first sight. This treatment of the question is based on the meaning of the Hebrew verb in its sense of "to do (something) thoroughly," as in Deuteronomy 13.14, 17.4, and has the support of the Septuagint. NEB's translation suits the similar question in verse 9 reasonably well, but is not so suitable here as Knox's first alternative, which is supported by other ancient translations.

Today's English Version

5 Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh. 6 Then the LORD God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died. 8 After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead.^e "I am better off dead than alive," he said.

9 But God said to him, "What right do you have to be angry about the plant?"

Jonah replied, "I have every right to be angry--angry enough to die!"

^ewished he were dead; or prayed that he would die.

The next major section in chapter 4 consists of verses 5 through 9. It may even be useful at this point to introduce a separate section heading, for example, "Jonah waits to see what will happen to Nineveh."

This section can perhaps best be introduced by some type of temporal particle such as "then," unless one wishes to interpret verse 5 as a type of flashback, in which case it may be necessary to translate "already Jonah had gone out east of the city and had sat down." The second sentence in verse 5 may be introduced by a locative particle such as "there," for example, "there he made a shelter for himself" or "there he had made a shelter for himself." Otherwise, most of the sentences in this section have well placed transitions, and in general the discourse structure presents no serious complications.

4.5 Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh.

Revised Standard Version

5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

6 And the LORD God appointed a plant,^b and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.^b 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant,^b so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?"^b And he said, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die."

^bHeb *qiqayon*, probably the *castor oil plant*

As noted in connection with 3.5, some (for example, Moffatt) would transpose this verse to follow 3.4. But in spite of the grammatical form, which suggests that the events in this verse follow directly on 3.4, the author may here be using once again the technique of the flashback noticed in earlier chapters (for example 1.10). The reason for introducing this statement here rather than earlier in the narrative, which would be its logical position, may have been the link between the shelter which Jonah makes for his own protection and the similar action on God's part described in the next verse. In any case, this verse would be needed as an introduction to verse 6.

If verse 5 involves a flashback, the verbs need to be understood as pluperfects, "Jonah had gone out...He had made..." Grammatically the Hebrew is of the same form as in 1.17, where the meaning of the first verb is also pluperfect.

In a high percentage of languages east is expressed simply as "in the direction of the rising sun" or even "toward the sun" or "toward the morning sun."

The significance of Jonah's sitting down on the east side of the city may lie in the fact that he had approached it from the west, delivered his message, and then continued through to the far side. Perhaps, however, there is an allusion here to the east wind mentioned in verse 8. The author presumably expects Jonah to be far enough to the east of the city to avoid being involved in any disaster that might overtake it while he waited to see what would happen to Nineveh.

There is a serious contradiction in some languages in translating verse 5 literally, for it would suggest that Jonah sat down and then made a shelter for himself. It would be better, therefore, in a number of languages to translate "Jonah went out east of the city; there he made a shelter for himself and sat down in its shade, waiting to see..."

The nature of the shelter which Jonah constructed is not described, but presumably it was something quite fragile and easily constructed. The word is the same as that which occurs in Isaiah 1.8 and in the regulations for the Festival of Shelters in Leviticus 23.42,43. In a number of languages the closest equivalent of shelter is the type of temporary shelter often built in fields as protection against the noonday sun or as a place where persons may remain while guarding a harvest, equivalent to what is called in English a "lean-to."

Sat in its shade may simply be rendered as "sat beneath it" or "sat protected by it."

The addition of "sulking" in LB is not justified in terms of the text.

Then the LORD God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant.

Just as the Lord arranged for a fish in 1.17, so he arranges for a plant to grow up and give added shelter to Jonah. The same verb is used in 1.17, here, and in the next two verses. The exact nature of the plant has been the object of much discussion, and various translations have been suggested, some based on etymology and some on ancient translations. Fauna and Flora of the Bible favors "castor oil plant," pointing out the similarity between the Hebrew *qiqayon* and the Egyptian name for this plant. This is the translation found in Chinese Union Version, Mowinckel, JB as well as in the margin of RSV and NEB. In Jewish Publication Society the word "ricinus" is used to denote this same plant. An alternative suggestion, based on the Septuagint, is "gourd," as in KJV, Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, Berkeley, RV (NEB "climbing gourd"). NAB has "a gourd plant," accompanied by a note stating that the Hebrew word "means here a wide-leaved plant of the cucumber or castor-bean variety," and Berkeley has a similar note. Knox, following the Vulgate, translates as "ivy plant," while Basic English and LB prefer "vine." By using the general expression, a plant, TEV recognizes that the exact nature of the plant is immaterial. There is not even any evidence that the author depicts it as climbing up the shelter; it could just as well have been standing independently. RSV and New American Standard Bible are also content to have "plant" in the text, though in each case the marginal note supports "castor oil plant." The plant is not mentioned anywhere else, so there is really no clear evidence by which to identify it.

The expression LORD God used here is an unusual combination, occurring mainly in the story of creation in Genesis 2 and 3 and in Chronicles, but otherwise not more than half a dozen times. It is not the same Hebrew expression as is translated "Sovereign LORD" in TEV. The expression the LORD God may be expressed as "God who is the Lord" or "the Lord who is God." It would be wrong to use an expression in which "the Lord" is simply an honorific title of God, equivalent to "sir God."

The verb in the expression "should grow up" (NEB) may either be understood as the simple form, with the plant as subject, or the causative, with God as subject; the form is the same.

As a causative the verb made a plant grow up may be expressed as "the Lord God caused a plant to grow up." Over Jonah may be "above Jonah." It is important to avoid an expression which would mean that the plant covered Jonah; in fact, it is better in some instances to translate the first part of verse 6 as "the Lord God made a plant grow up so as to shade Jonah."

According to RSV the plant grew up "to save him from his discomfort." This last word translates the same Hebrew word as is found in 3.8,10 and 4.1. There the word refers to the evil behavior of the people of Nineveh, the disaster which God decided not to inflict on them, and the displeasure felt by Jonah in view of God's mercy. So here the word may refer to Jonah's discomfort or his "distress" (NEB), in other words, his evil situation. This is expressed in a positive way in TEV, so that he would be more comfortable. But in view of the use of the same word in verse 1 with reference to Jonah, it may mean "to release him from his bad mood" (compare JB "and soothe his ill-humor"), especially in view of the third person suffix.

So that he would be more comfortable may be expressed in this context as "so that he would not be so hot." Such an expression may, however, have a double meaning, referring not only to the heat of the sun upon him but to his own heated anger, thus suggesting a reference to 4.1.

There is no justification for the additional clause at the beginning of the verse in LB "and when the leaves of the shelter withered in the heat," since the Hebrew neither states nor implies this.

The result was as might be expected. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant. This is more forceful than NEB, "Jonah was grateful for the gourd." The construction here is similar to that of 1.16 "feared with a great fear." So here: "rejoiced with a great joy," (compare Matt 2.10 RSV). The expression Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant must be inverted in some languages to read "the plant caused Jonah to be very happy indeed" or "the plant made Jonah extremely happy."

4.7 But at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died.

Once again, God "arranged," but this time for a worm, which attacked the plant. This happened at dawn the next day, in other words, before the sun had risen. The word used here for worm is sometimes found in the singular in a collective sense as in Deuteronomy 28.39, Isaiah 14.11, and 66.24, but in such cases the meaning is clearly not singular.

The order of expression in the sequence at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm may be quite awkward if translated literally. The relationships can be more satisfactorily expressed in some languages as "at dawn the next day God commanded a worm to attack" or "when the sun rose the next day, God commanded a worm, Attack the plant."

The final clause and it died must often be set off from the command of God and introduced by some resultative particle, for example, "and so it died" or "and because of this it died." In a number of languages, however, one must be

very careful in the selection of a term meaning to die, since a word which is applicable to people may not be applicable to plants. For plants it may be necessary to say "dried up" or "withered."

4.8 After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead.^e "I am better off dead than alive," he said.

^ewished he were dead; or prayed that he would die.

Then the sun rose on that same morning and once again God "arranged" for a hot east wind to blow, to make matters still worse for Jonah. The meaning hot can only be guessed from the context. It does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament, but is found in one of the hymns at Qumran, also referring to an east wind. Various guesses at the meaning have been made, on the basis of etymology. One possibility is a connection with one of the Hebrew words for "sun," in a slightly different spelling. Another is a connection with the verb "to be silent," hence "oppressive, sultry," as RV, RSV, Berkeley, Jewish Publication Society. Koehler's lexicon suggests that the word harishith is really an error for hariphith, from haraph "to be sharp." But since this adjective does not occur elsewhere, the suggestion is not very convincing. It is generally agreed, however, that the meaning is "very hot," so that NAB, Basic English, and Smith-Goodspeed have "burning," and JB, NEB, New American Standard Bible "scorching." Moffatt is still more vivid with "sweltering," and Knox uses the special term "sirocco," the hot wind that blows across the desert, particularly in North Africa. Jonah was to the east of Nineveh and would be exposed to the full force both of the east wind and of the rising sun. The writer, having in mind the situation in Palestine where the hot wind blows from the east across the desert, thinks in the same terms of Nineveh.

God sent a hot east wind must be restructured as a causative in many instances, for example, "God caused a hot east wind to blow." A verb meaning "send" may be readily employed with persons as objects, but not with a physical event such as "wind."

According to TEV Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head, though the verb in its only other occurrence in Amos 8.13, means "to faint" rather than "to be about to faint." Presumably, although on the point of fainting, Jonah needed to be conscious enough to address God in the last part of the verse. The verb could perhaps here refer to sunstroke (compare Isa 49.10). Knox,

more picturesquely, has "all of a sweat." Though the rendering by Knox is picturesque, it may be regarded as misleading, since as long as a person is sweating, he is not likely to faint or to suffer from sunstroke. It is the failure to sweat which causes faintness. There is, of course, a problem in this verse since the reader may wonder why Jonah is not seated under the shade of the shelter and thus avoiding the sun's rays beating down on his head. The TEV deals with this problem to some extent by speaking of "faint from the heat of the sun," but the additional phrase beating down on his head may suggest to some readers a special difficulty concerning Jonah's actual location.

Only rarely can one translate literally the sun beating down on his head, since the sun does not employ physical violence. In some instances one may speak of "the sun touching his head with heat" or "the sun burning his head" or "the sun causing his head to be very hot."

So he wished he were dead, as in verse 3. But this time Jonah does not ask God to take away his nephesh, (see 2.5,6) but requests that his nephesh might die, since as he said previously, "I am better off dead than alive." The wording of Jonah's request is the same as that of Elijah in 1 Kings 19.4. There is something paradoxical in the notion of the request for one's own death. Similarly, in Exodus 4.19, Moses is given the assurance that those who seek his life, in other words, who demand his death, are themselves dead (compare Matt 2.20). In 1 Kings 3.11 Solomon is commended for not seeking the life of his enemies, in other words, their death (compare Job 31.30).

The context and the resemblance to verse 3 both indicate that Jonah is here addressing God. He is not simply expressing to himself the desirability of death rather than life, as in a literal translation "and he begged his soul that it might die."

Jonah's wish for death must be expressed in many languages as direct discourse, for example, "he wished, I would like to be dead" or "he said to himself, I wish I were dead" or "...I do not want to live longer."

4.9 But God said to him, "What right do you have to be angry about the plant?"

Jonah replied, "I have every right to be angry--angry enough to die!"

God then asks Jonah the same question as in verse 4, but with the addition of about the plant, that is on account of the disappearance of the plant. On that occasion Jonah was indeed angry, as is clear from 4.1. But here he is not so much angry as miserable, or bad tempered.

To be angry about the plant must be expanded somewhat as "to be angry because of what happened to the plant." It

is important not to imply that Jonah was angry at the plant itself but because the plant had withered and died.

Jonah did not reply to the question that was put to him in verse 4, but here he replies by asserting emphatically that he had every justification for being angry. Jonah's response should be parallel to 4.4, but it may be very difficult to speak of "every right." One may, for example, say "I'm completely justified in being angry" or "I have a good reason to be angry" or "my anger is completely reasonable."

The words angry enough to die can be taken with a double meaning. One is the surface meaning, that his anger is sufficient to justify his request for death. The other meaning takes the words "even unto death" (KJV) as an expression denoting the superlative (compare Moffatt and NEB, "mortally angry," and Knox, "deadly angry").² The same expression as occurs here in Jonah is also found in a medieval letter written in Hebrew, also with the meaning "I was extremely angry." It is difficult to do justice to both these senses in one translation, since by emphasizing the idiom expressing the superlative, the literal sense, angry enough to die is likely to be concealed. The use of hyperbole by Jonah on this occasion is the more absurd when one takes into account the reasons for Jonah's anger on both occasions: in verse 1, because he was humiliated by the sparing of Nineveh, and in verse 9, because he was inconvenienced by the withering of a plant.

It may be possible to combine the concepts of the intensity of anger together with Jonah's suggestion of wanting to die (a reflection of verses 3 and 8) by translating "I am so angry that I want to die" or "I am very, very angry and therefore prefer to die" or "...want to die rather than live."

Today's English Version

10 The LORD said to him, "This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn't do anything for it and you didn't make it grow--yet you feel sorry for it! 11 How much more, then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals!"

Revised Standard Version

10 And the LORD said, "You pity the plant,^b for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

^bHeb *qiqayon*, probably the castor oil plant

The Lord's final response to Jonah (verses 10 and 11) can be introduced by a separate section heading, for

example, "The Lord's Response to Jonah" or "How the Lord Finally Answers Jonah."

The analogy between what happened to the plant and what might have happened to Nineveh is not as clearly in focus as it might be. One must therefore make certain that the relationships are as evident as possible. The contrast can sometimes be made plainer by emphasizing "feeling sorry for what happened to the plant" rather than merely "feeling sorry for it."

4.10,11

The LORD said to him, "This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn't do anything for it and you didn't make it grow--yet you feel sorry for it! 11 How much more, then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals!"

In the concluding verses the Lord has the last word and ends by putting a question to Jonah which receives no answer. The situation is summed up when the Lord sets out the contrast between two causes for concern. On the one hand, Jonah is concerned because a fragile plant has withered, and on the other hand, God is concerned for the well-being of thousands of innocent people. These two verses simply make explicit what is implied in God's questions to Jonah in 4.4,9. Jonah had failed to make an effective defense for his anger on either occasion. So now it is God's turn to draw the contrast between the triviality of Jonah's indignation at the death of a plant and the seriousness of the fate of the inhabitants of Nineveh.

The phrase this plant must be altered to "that plant" in some languages, since the plant was no longer existing. Furthermore, it may be necessary to translate disappeared the next as "died the next night" or perhaps "withered and died before the next day," since according to verse 7 it was at dawn the next day that the worm attacked the plant.

You didn't do anything for it may be rendered as "you didn't help it at all."

The same word in Hebrew is used for feel sorry in verse 10 and have pity in verse 11, but it is not so natural in English to use the same word in both contexts. The difficulty arises partly because in the one case the plant was destroyed, and in the other the people were spared, which makes it inappropriate for God to speak of "being sorry" for them, as in NEB. A hint at a suitable meaning is found in 1 Samuel 24.10, where David "spares" Saul's life. This is a suitable verb for the Lord's treatment of Nineveh, and Jonah could be said to wish to "spare" the plant. As is so often the case, the area of meaning of a word in one

language does not coincide with the area of a word that apparently corresponds to it in another (compare Gen 18.24, 26, where the word used for God's sparing of Sodom is not the same as is used here with regard to Nineveh).

Yet you feel sorry for it may be better expressed in some languages as "yet you feel sorry for what happened to it" or "...what happened to the plant."

The verb translated have pity occurs about two dozen times in the Old Testament, and in three-quarters of these it is used with a negative, mostly in the form of a prohibition. Apart from this passage in Jonah, God is the subject four times, twice in a prayer (Neh 13.22 and Joel 2.17) and twice in statements emphasizing God's refusal to pity his own people (Jer 13.14, Ezek 24.14). Here, on the contrary, God is determined to show pity towards foreigners.

Have pity on may be expressed as "show mercy to" or "show special kindness to." The concept of pity may be expressed in some languages in figurative ways, for example, "to have my heart go out to," "to show my feelings to," or "to embrace with kindness."

The author emphasizes also the contrast between Jonah's relation to the plant and God's relation to the people of Nineveh. Jonah didn't do anything for it and didn't make it grow, whereas by implication the people of Nineveh were created by God. The plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next (literally, "which came into existence as the son of a night and perished as the son of a night") similar to the withering grass and flowers of Isaiah 40.6-8. But human beings, Jonah must learn, cannot be regarded as expendable to suit the whim of a prophet. The innocence of those whose destruction Jonah wished for is emphasized by the expression in verse 11 "who cannot tell their right hand from their left." TEV takes this as a reference to innocent children. Similarly, Moffatt and Smith-Goodspeed have "infants" and Jewish Publication Society, with its "persons who do not yet know," suggests children without actually saying so. LB illustrates the peril of trying to "spiritualize" the Bible by reading into the text something neither expressed nor implied by the author: "a great city like Nineveh with its 120,000 people in utter spiritual darkness," though the literal meaning is given in a footnote, "with its 120,000 children who don't know their right hands from their left." Most translations have "persons" (for example, RSV), but Knox evidently supposed that all the people of Nineveh were equally unskilled in distinguishing between one hand and another, "Here is a great city, with a hundred and twenty thousand folk in it, and none of them can tell right from left." Here it is best to follow TEV with innocent children, rather than adopt the Hebrew idiom with its reference to the right hand and the left. Obviously no conclusions can be drawn regarding the total population of Nineveh on the basis of the figures in this verse.

The transitional phrase after all must often be expanded if it is to indicate the appropriate relationships, for example, "when everything has been considered," "when everything has been mentioned" or "when our thoughts have included all that has happened" or "...all that is involved." One may even employ a somewhat idiomatic expression, for example, "when you really think about it."

Innocent children may be expressed simply as "children who have no guilt" or "children who have done no wrong" or "children who cannot be blamed for what happened."

It may be meaningless to speak of "a city having innocent children in it." More commonly, one would speak of "innocent children dwelling in a city" or "...having their homes in the city." Such an expression, however, would require the many animals to be spoken of in a somewhat different way, for example, "and there are many animals there also" or "within the city are many animals," referring, of course, to domestic animals.

God's concern for the people of Nineveh, a concern which included their many cattle, resembles the expression in Jeremiah 18.7,8 and Ezekiel 18.23. Nothing is said here in the conclusion about the repentance of the people of Nineveh; God's appeal to Jonah's conscience is based on their humanity rather than their piety.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. It has been suggested that this book is pictured as the continuation of the section relating to Jonah in 2 Kings 14.25-27. In other words, Jonah having been assured of God's gracious attitude to Israel is entrusted with a mission to condemn Nineveh (W. Rudolph, Kommentar zum Alten Testament XIII 2, page 335).

2. See Gesenius-Kautzsch section 135p; "'immahem refers to the sailors included in sense under the term 'Onniya.'

3. Compare F. I. Andersen, The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew, page 79; "A new development in a story may be marked by a circumstantial clause."

4. Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H. H. Rowley (T. & T. Clark) page 69.

5. J. Ziegler (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum; Gottingen, 1967) suggests that the omission of the question in codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Venetus of the Septuagint was due to the confusion arising from two occurrences of hēmin in the same verse (homoioteleuton).

6. Det Gamle Testamente (Norwegian Translation by S. Michelet, S. Mowinckel and N. Messel. Vol III, 1944) page 661.

7. Compare Gesenius-Kautzsch section 2b.

8. See Gesenius-Kautzsch section 113u and compare 1 Samuel 17.41 and Proverbs 4.18.

9. W. J. Horwitz suggests (Vetus Testamentum Vol XXIII, page 370 and following) that this verse "originally stated that the ship knows that Jonah is guilty," since the consonants for "I" and for "ship" are the same in Hebrew. Such an extreme example of personification is far from convincing.

10. The preposition used here in Hebrew is known as the beth pretii; see Gesenius-Kautzsch section 119p: "the price being considered as the means of acquiring a thing." Other examples include Genesis 29.18: "in exchange for your younger daughter Rachel."

11. Kommentar zum Alten Testament, page 345.

CHAPTER 2

1. See S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, Volume 2, page 33.

2. Johnson, A.R. 1946. Jonah 2.3-10, A Study in Cultic Phantasy, H.H. Rowley, ed. in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Page 84.

3. See the article by H.F. Peacock, Translating the Word for "Soul" in the Old Testament (The Bible Translator Volume 27, pages 216 and following).

4. Compare Gesenius-Kautzsch section 155e.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 3

1. See D. Winton Thomas, *Vetus Testamentum* Vol.III, page 216.
2. Interpreter's Bible, Volume vi, page 889.
3. A. Jepsen, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testa-ment*, Volume 1, Column 327.

CHAPTER 4

1. Wolff, H.W. 1974. *Hosea* (translated by G. Stansell). Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Page 52.
2. A good treatment of this idiom is given by D. Winton Thomas (*Vetus Testamentum* Vol.III, page 219 and following), in which he mentions other examples of the same phrase, such as Judges 16.16, "wearying him to death" (NEB), where a literal meaning is not intended.

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GLOSSARY

adjective is a word which limits, describes, or qualifies a noun. In English, "red," "tall," "beautiful," "important," etc. are adjectives.

adverb is a word which limits, describes, or modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. In English, "quickly," "soon," "primarily," "very," etc. are adverbs.

adverbial refers to adverbs. An adverbial phrase is a phrase which functions as an adverb. See phrase.

allegory is a story in which persons (or other figures) and actions are used to symbolize spiritual forces, truths, human conduct, experience, etc. Allegorical interpretation of scripture sees similar symbolic meaning in the historical parts of the Bible.

anachronistic describes an expression which is incorrectly used through being historically or chronologically misplaced. For example, to refer to Jonah buying a ticket for his sea-voyage would be anachronistic because it introduces a modern custom into an ancient setting.

aorist refers to a set of forms in Greek verbs which denote an action completed without the implication of continuance or duration. Usually, but not always, the action is considered as completed in past time.

apposition (appositional construction) is the placing of two expressions together so that they both identify the same object or event, for example, "my friend, Mr. Smith." The one expression is said to be the appositive of the other.

Aramaic is a language whose use became widespread in Southwest Asia before the time of Christ. It became the common language of the Jewish people in place of Hebrew, to which it is related.

attributive is a term which limits or describes another term. In "the big man ran slowly," the adjective "big" is an attributive of "man" and the adverb "slowly" is an attributive of "ran." Attribution, therefore, is the act of assigning a certain quality or character to an object or an event.

canonical is a word used to describe books or parts of the Bible which are included in the canon of the Old or New Testament. The canon is the list of books which are accepted as inspired Scripture, with religious authority.

causative (also causal relation, etc.) relates to events and indicates that someone caused something to happen, rather than that he did it himself. In "John ran the horse," the verb "ran" is a causative, since it was not John who ran, but rather it was John who caused the horse to run.

chiastic construction (chiasmus) is a reversal of the order of words or phrases in an otherwise parallel construction. Example: "I (1)/was shapen (2)/ in iniquity (3)// in sin (3)/ did my mother conceive (2)/ me (1)."

clause is a grammatical construction normally consisting of a subject and a predicate. An independent clause may stand alone as a sentence, but a dependent clause (functioning as a noun, adjective, or adverb) does not form a complete sentence.

conditional refers to a clause or phrase which expresses or implies a condition, in English usually introduced by "if."

conjunctions are words which serve as connectors between words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. "And," "but," "if," "because," etc. are typical conjunctions in English.

connotation involves the emotional attitude of a speaker (or writer) to an expression he uses and the emotional response of the hearers (or readers). Connotations may be good or bad, strong or weak, and they are often described in such terms as "colloquial," "taboo," "vulgar," "old-fashioned," and "intimate."

context is that which precedes and/or follows any part of a discourse. For example, the context of a word or phrase in Scripture would be the other words and phrases associated with it in the sentence, paragraph, section, and even the entire book in which it occurs. The context of a term often affects its meaning, so that it does not mean exactly the same thing in one context as it does in another.

direct discourse. See discourse.

discourse is the connected and continuous communication of thought by means of language, whether spoken or written. The way in which the elements of a discourse are arranged is called discourse structure. Direct discourse is the reproduction of the actual words of one person embedded in the discourse of another person. For example, "He declared, 'I will have nothing to do with this man.'" Indirect discourse is the reporting of the words of one person embedded in the discourse of another person in an altered grammatical form. For example, "He said he would have nothing to do with that man."

ellipsis (plural ellipses) or elliptical expression refers to words or phrases normally omitted in a discourse when the sense is perfectly clear without them. In the following sentence, the words within brackets are elliptical: "If (it is) necessary (for me to do so), I will wait up all night." What is elliptical in one language may need to be expressed in another.

emendation is the process of substituting what appears to be a better form of the text for one which is judged to be incorrect.

explicit refers to information which is expressed in the words of a discourse. This is in contrast to implicit information. See implicit.

first person. See person.

first person plural includes the speaker and at least one other person: "we," "us," "our," "ours."

first person singular is the speaker: "I," "me," "my," "mine."

generic has reference to all the members of a particular class or kind of objects. It is the contrary of specific. For example, the term "animal" is generic, while "dog" is specific. However, "dog" is generic in relation to "poodle."

genitive case is a grammatical set of forms occurring in many languages, used primarily to indicate that a noun is the modifier of another noun. The genitive often indicates possession, but it may also indicate measure, origin, characteristic, etc.

honorific is a form used to express respect or deference. In many languages such forms are obligatory in talking about royalty and persons of social distinction.

idiom or idiomatic expression is a combination of terms whose meanings cannot be derived by adding up the meanings of the parts. "To hang one's head," "to have a green thumb," and "behind the eightball" are American idioms. Idioms almost always lose their meaning completely when translated from one language to another.

implicit refers to information that is not formally represented in a discourse, since it is assumed that it is already known to the receptor. This is in contrast to explicit information, which is expressed in the words of a discourse. See explicit.

indirect discourse. See discourse.

irony is a sarcastic or humorous manner of discourse in which what is said is intended to express its opposite; for example, "That was a wise thing to do!" is intended to convey the meaning "That was a stupid thing to do."

locative refers to a grammatical form or term which indicates a place in or at which an event occurs or an object or person is located.

metaphor (metaphorical term) is likening one object to another by speaking of it as if it were the other, as "flowers dancing in the breeze." Metaphors are the most commonly used figures of speech and are often so subtle that a speaker or writer is not conscious of the fact that he is using figurative language. See simile.

modifier is a grammatical term referring to a word or a phrase which is used to modify or affect the meaning of another part of the sentence, such as an adjective modifying a noun or an adverb modifying a verb.

noun is a word that is the name of a subject of discourse, as a person, place, thing, idea, etc. See proper name.

orthographically refers to a system of writing and is often used in speaking of a similarity or difference in spelling.

participial phrase is a phrase governed by a participle. See participle.

participle is a verbal adjective, that is, a word which retains some of the characteristics of a verb while functioning as an adjective. In "singing waters" and "painted desert," "singing" and "painted" are participles.

particle is a small word whose grammatical form does not change. In English the most common particles are prepositions and conjunctions.

passive voice. See voice.

Pentateuch is the term which is used to refer to the first five books of the Bible, sometimes called "the Torah," "the Law," or "the Books of Moses."

person, as a grammatical term, refers to the speaker, the person spoken to, or the person(s) or thing(s) spoken about. First person is the person(s) or thing(s) speaking ("I," "me," "my," "mine"; "we," "us," "our," "ours"). Second person is the person(s) or thing(s) spoken to ("thou," "thee," "thy," "thine"; "ye," "you," "your," "yours"). Third person is the person(s) or thing(s) spoken about ("he," "she," "it," "his," "her," "them," "their," etc.). The examples here given are all pronouns, but in many languages the verb forms distinguish between the persons and also indicate whether they are singular or plural.

phrase is a grammatical construction of two or more words, but less than a complete clause or a sentence. A phrase may have the same function as the head word of the phrase. For example, "the old man" has essentially the same functions as "man" would have, or it may have a function which is different from the function of either set of constituents, for example, "to town," "for John."

pluperfect means, literally, "more than perfect" and refers to a verb form which indicates an action already completed when another action occurred. For example, in "The meeting had already ended when the speaker arrived," the verb "had...ended" is pluperfect.

predicate is the division of a clause which contrasts with or supplements the subject. The subject is the topic of the clause and the predicate is what is said about the subject.

preposition is a word (usually a particle) whose function is to indicate the relation of a noun or pronoun to another noun, pronoun, verb, or adjective. Some English prepositions are "for," "from," "in," "to," "with."

proper name or proper noun is the name of a unique object, as "Jerusalem," "Joshua," "Jordan." However, the same may be applied to more than one object, for example, "John" (the Baptist or the Apostle) and "Antioch" (of Syria or of Pisidia).

redundancy is the expression of the same information more than once. Anything which is completely redundant is entirely predictable from the context.

relative clause is a dependent clause which qualifies the object to which it refers. In "the man whom you saw," the clause "whom you saw" is relative because it relates to and qualifies "man."

render means translate or express in a language different from the original.

repentance is the act of turning away from past wrongdoing, turning to God, and adopting a new way of life.

restructure is to reconstruct or rearrange. See structure.

rhetorical refers to special forms of speech which are used for emphasis or to create an effect on the receptor. A rhetorical question, for example, is not designed to elicit an answer but to make an emphatic statement.

second person. See person.

Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, made some two hundred years before Christ. It is often abbreviated as LXX.

simile (pronounced SIM-i-lee) is a figure of speech which describes one event or object by comparing it to another, as "she runs like a deer," "he is as straight as an arrow." Similes are less subtle than metaphors in that they use "like," "as," or some other word to mark or signal the comparison.

structure is the systematic arrangement of the form of language, including the ways in which words combine into phrases, phrases into clauses, and clauses into sentences. Because this process may be compared to the building of a house or a bridge, such words as structure and construction are used in reference to it. To separate and rearrange the various components of a sentence or other unit of discourse in the translation process is to restructure it.

subject. See predicate.

Syriac is the name of a Semitic language, a part of the Aramaic family, used in Western Asia, into which the Bible was translated at a very early date.

temporal refers to time. Temporal relations are the relations of time between events. A temporal clause is a dependent clause which indicates the time of the action in the main clause.

tense is usually a form of a verb which indicates time relative to a discourse or some event in a discourse. The most common forms of tense are past, present, and future.

textual refers to the various Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of

the Scriptures. A textual reading is the reading of a particular manuscript (or group of manuscripts), especially where it differs from others. Textual evidence is the cumulative evidence for a particular reading. Textual problems arise when it is difficult to reconcile or to account for conflicting readings.

third person. See person.

transitionals are words or phrases which mark the connections between related events. Some typical transitionals are "next," "then," "later," "after that," "the day following," "when this was done."

translation is the reproduction in a receptor language of the closest natural equivalent of a message in the source language, first, in terms of meaning, and second, in terms of style.

translational refers to translation. A translator may seem to be following an inferior reading (see textual) when he is simply adjusting the rendering to the requirements of the receptor language, that is, for a "translational reason."

transliteration is to represent a word from the source language in the letters of the receptor language rather than to translate its meaning.

verbs are a grammatical class of words which express existence, action, or occurrence, as "be," "become," "run," "think," etc.

vocative refers to the person addressed (spoken to). Some languages have distinctive vocative forms for nouns.

voice in grammar is the relation of the action expressed by a verb to the participants in the action. In English and many other languages, the active voice indicates that the subject performs the action ("John hit the man") while the passive voice indicates that the subject is being acted upon ("the man was hit"). The Greek language has a middle voice, in which the subject may be regarded as doing something to or for himself (or itself).

Vulgate is the Latin version of the Bible translated and/or edited originally by Saint Jerome. It has been traditionally the official version of the Roman Catholic Church.

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